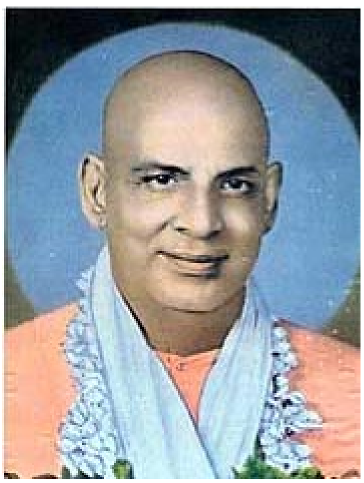
PRACTICE OF BRAHMACHARYA

By

SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA



Sri Swami Sivananda
Founder of
The Divine Life Society

SERVE, LOVE, GIVE, PURIFY, MEDITATE, REALIZE
So Says
Sri Swami Sivananda

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

Instincts and appetites form a part of all life on earth. Sense impulses and biological urges are common to animal and man alike. Sex is one of the prominent, most important and absolutely essential aspects of human, animal as well as plant life. Sex is an integral part of life—human, animal and plant. While this aspect of life is regulated by nature in plants and by instinct in animals, in man it is left to his common-sense, intelligence and his developed reason to control and regulate the same. The vast and ancient scriptures of the world offer human society specific rules and regulations in this respect. With regard to India, as a nation, our forefathers followed the do's and don'ts of the Dharma Sastras in meticulous detail and this, in large measure, contributed to their health, longevity and spiritual welfare.

But alas, in the present-day world, and more particularly among the educated class, in all walks of society and in all age groups, norms of conduct laid down by the scriptures are flouted with so much impunity that we see, all around us, the number of physical, mental and moral wrecks increasing every day. One reason for this sad state of affairs is modern man's ignorance of his own scriptural treasures.

Swami Sivananda came on the Indian scene, in the early thirties, to blast this ignorance of the people by offering the hoary wisdom of the ancients through the media of his simple English writings. It is well known that spiritual treatises apart, the great Master, whose love for mankind knew no bounds, wrote a number of books concerning health, hygiene and medicine. One such book was "Practice of Brahmacharya" which dealt mostly with the subject of celibacy, and where celibacy was not possible, a regulated sex life. This book has been popular with the public.

This apart, the Swamiji's thoughts on the subject of sex and sex sublimation are also to be seen here and there spread over his voluminous writings. In the present volume, all of Swamiji's thoughts and instructions on the subject of sex and celibacy have been gathered up from "Practice of Brahmacharya" and elsewhere, and thoroughly edited, with a view to offering the public, and especially to the younger generation, a working guide to the vital subject of sex sublimation. This has been done as an act of loving service to modern youth who are often left groping in the dark by an irresponsible society. These days we often hear about "juvenile delinquency," but this juvenile delinquency itself is the result of adult irresponsibility. The youth of the world craves for guidance which is often not forthcoming from the parents, teachers or society.

It is hoped that this book of holy Master Swami Sivananda will fill the above-mentioned lacuna and offer the youth of the world the knowledge and guidance which they so richly deserve in a vital area which affects their physical, mental, ethical and spiritual well-being.

We pray that the blessings of the holy Master may pour on all those who may chance to go through the following pages and open up a new chapter in their lives. May all be healthy, happy and spiritually blessed. *Loka Samastha Sukhino Bhavantu!*

8th September, 1988. —THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

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PRAYER FOR PURITY

O loving Lord of Compassion! Hey Prabhu! The Soul of my soul, the Life of my life, the Mind of my mind, the Ear of my ears, Light of lights, Sun of suns! Give light and purity. Let me get established in physical and mental Brahmacharya. Let me be pure in thoughts, word and deed. Give me strength to control my Indriyas (senses) and observe the Brahmacharya Vrata. Protect me from all sorts of temptations of this world. Let all my Indriyas be ever engaged in Thy sweet service.

Wipe out the sexual Samskaras (impressions) and Vasanas (subtle desires). Annihilate lust from my mind. Make me a true Brahmachari, Sadachari and Oordhvareta Yogi. Let me be chaste in my look. Let me always walk in the path of righteousness. Make me as pure as Swami Vivekananda, Swami Dayananda, Bhishma Pitamaha, Hanuman or Lakshmana. Forgive. Forgive all my Aparadhas (offenses). I am Thine. I am Thine. Trahi, Trahi. Protect, protect. Prachodayat, Prachodayat. Enlighten, enlighten. Guide me. Om. Om. Om.

Dedicated to the Youth of the World

SECTION I. THE PHENOMENON OF SEX

1. THE PRESENT-DAY DEGRADATION

There is a great illusion in front of man. It troubles him in the form of woman. There is a great illusion in front of woman. It troubles her in the form of man.

Go wherever you like—Amsterdam, London or New York. Analyze this world of phenomenal experience. You will find only two things—sex and ego.

The sex instinct is the greatest urge in human life. Sex energy or lust is the most deep-rooted instinct in man. Sex energy entirely fills the mind, intellect, Prana, senses and the whole body. It is the oldest of the factors that have gone into the constitution of the human being.

A man has a thousand and one desires. But the central strong desire is the sexual desire. The fundamental desire is the urge for a mate. All hang on this central basic desire. The desire for money, the desire for a son, the desire for property, the desire for houses, the desire for cattle and other desires come later on.

Because the whole creation of this universe is to be kept up, God has made the sexual desire very, very powerful. Otherwise, many Jivanmuktas would have cropped up quite easily, just as graduates from universities. It is easy to get university qualifications. It demands a little money, memory, intelligence and a little strain. But it is an uphill climb to obliterate the sexual impulse. He who has completely eradicated lust and is established in mental Brahmacharya is Brahman or God Himself.

This world is nothing but sex and ego. Ego is the chief thing. It is the basis. Sex hangs on the ego. If the ego is destroyed by Vichara or enquiry of "Who am I?", the sex idea takes to its heels by itself. Man, master of his destiny, has lost his divine glory and has become a slave, a tool, in the hands of sex and ego on account of ignorance. Sex and ego are the products of Avidya or nescience. The dawn of knowledge of the Self annihilates these two enemies of Atman, the two dacoits who are plundering the helpless, ignorant, little, false Jiva, the illusory "I".

Man has degraded himself to a great degree by becoming the puppet of passion. Alas! He has become an imitative machine. He has lost his power of discrimination. He has sunk into the most abject form of slavery. What a sad state! What a lamentable plight indeed! If he wishes to regain his lost divine state and Brahmic glory, his whole being must be transformed, his sex desire must be completely transmuted by sublime divine thoughts and regular meditation. Transmutation of the sex desire is a very potent, efficacious and satisfactory way to realize eternal bliss.

The world is all sexy

Passion reigns supreme in all parts of the world. The minds of people are filled with sexual thoughts. The world is all sexy. The whole world is under a tremendous sexual intoxication. All are deluded and move in the world with perverted intellects. No thought of God. No talk of God. It is all fashion, restaurants, hotels, dinners, dances, races and cinema. Their life ends in eating, drinking and procreating. That is all.

Passion has introduced new fashions not only in London, Paris and Lahore, but even in Madras amongst the Brahmin girls of orthodox families who apply Cherry Blossom Powder and Hazeline Snow to their faces, instead of the sacred turmeric powder, and dress their hair like the French girls. This sort of vile imitation has crept into the mind of our boys and girls in India. The sacred percepts and teachings of our ancient sages and Rishis have been totally ignored. What a lamentable state! They will accept anything as true only if a Johnson or a Russel brings something by way of the theory of evolution, motion, atom, relativity or transcendentalism. Shameful indeed! Their brains are all clogged with foreign particles. They do not have the brain to absorb anything good in others. There is a miserable degeneration in the present young men and women in India. This is the age when they cannot walk even a short distance without a Rickshaw, a car, a tram, a bicycle or a carriage. What an awful artificial life! Bobbing of the hair amongst the ladies in India has become a severe epidemic and has invaded the whole of India. This is all due to the mischief of passion and greed.

Young men of the present day indiscriminately imitate the West and this results in their own ruin. Men are swayed by lust. They lose their sense of righteousness, and of time and place. They never discriminate between right and wrong. They lose all sense of shame.

Read the history of the crimes—robbery, rapes, kidnapping, assaults, murders—that come up for trial before the Sessions Courts. Lust is at the root of all this. It may be lust for money or lust for carnal pleasure. Lust ruins life, lustre, strength, vitality, memory, wealth, fame, holiness, peace, wisdom and devotion.

Man, with his boasted intellect, has to learn lessons from birds and animals. Even animals have more self-control than men. It is only the so-called man who has degraded himself much by indulgence. At the heat of sexual excitement, he repeats the same ignoble act again and again. He has not a bit of self-control. He is an absolute slave to passion. He is a puppet in the hands of passion. Like rabbits he procreates and brings forth countless children to swell up the numbers of beggars in the world. Lions, elephants, bulls and other powerful animals have better self-control than men. Lions cohabit only once in a year. After conception, the female animals will never allow the male animals to approach them till the young ones are weaned and they themselves become healthy and strong. Man only violates the laws of nature and consequently suffers from innumerable diseases. He has degenerated to a level far lower than that of animals in this respect.

As a king is no king without a treasury, subjects and an army, as a flower is no flower without fragrance, as a river is no river without water, so also, a man is no man without

Brahmacharya. Ahara, Nidra, Bhaya and Maithuna—food, sleep, fear and copulation—are common to both animals and men. That which differentiates a man from an animal is Dharma, Viveka and Vichara Sakti. Jnana and Vichara can be secured only by the preservation of Veerya. If a man has not got these qualifications, he should really be reckoned as a veritable animal only.

If lust, which is the source of all enjoyments in this world, ceases, then all worldly bondage, which has its substratum in the mind, will cease. Even the most virulent poison is no poison when compared to lust. The former defiles one body only, whereas the latter adulterates many bodies in successive births. You are a slave of passions and desires, emotions and attractions. When are you going to rise up from this miserable state? Those persons, who, in spite of the knowledge of the non-existence of happiness, both in the past and in the present, in the baneful objects of the world, do yet entangle themselves in them with their thoughts clinging to them, deserve the appellation of an ass, if not a worse one. If you do not possess Viveka, if you do not try your best for salvation, if you spend your lifetime in eating, drinking and sleeping, you are a horizontal being only, having to learn some lessons from those animals, which possess far more self-restraint.

The sexual degradation that has overtaken mankind today is due directly to the fact that people have assumed that there is a natural "sexual instinct" in human beings. It is not so. The natural instinct is the procreative one. If men and women restrict sexual indulgence to mere procreation, then that itself is observance of Brahmacharya. As this is found to be impossible in the vast majority of cases, total abstinence is enjoined on those who seek the higher values of life. As far as the Sadhaka of burning Mumukshutva is concerned, celibacy is a *sine qua non*, as he cannot afford to waste his vital energy at all.

The gratification of every worldly desire is sinful; the flesh should be the abject slave of the spirit intent upon divine things. Man was created for a life of spiritual communion with God, but he yielded to the seduction of evil demons who availed themselves of the sensuous side of his nature to draw him away from the contemplation of the divine and lead him to the earthly life. Moral goodness, therefore, consists in renouncing all sensuous pleasures, in separating from the world through discrimination and dispassion, in living solely after the spirit, in imitating the perfection and purity of God. Sensuality is inconsistent with wisdom and holiness. The great business of life is to avoid impurity.

Spiritual Sadhana is the answer to sex attraction

Real culture is the establishment of perfect physical and mental Brahmacharya. Real culture is the realization of the identity of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul through direct experience. For a passionate worldly-minded man, the terms Self-realization, God, Self, Vairagya, renunciation, death and burial ground are very revolting and terrifying, because he is attached to objects. The terms singing, dancing, talks about women and so on are very pleasing.

The attraction for objects will gradually vanish if one begins to think seriously of the unreal nature of the world. People are burnt by the fire of lust. All measures that are calculated to eradicate this dire disease should be initiated and put through. All people should be made fully

conversant with the different methods that will help them to root out the dire enemy lust. If they fail in one method, they can take recourse to another. Lust is a brutal instinct in unregenerated men. One should be ashamed to repeat again and again the sensual acts when one is fully aware that the goal of life is Self-realization through the attainment of purity and the practice of constant meditation. An objector may say that these topics should not be dealt with openly, but should rather be talked about secretly. This is wrong. What is the use of hiding things? Hiding a thing is a sin.

In these days of modern culture and new civilization, in this era of scientific advancement, these lines may not be relished by some people. They may remark that some of the terms are jarring, revolting, offending and indecent and will not suit the people of refined tastes. They are entirely mistaken. These lines will produce a very deep impression in the minds of thirsting aspirants who are longing for liberation. Their minds will be entirely changed. There is no real spiritual culture amongst the people of modern society. Etiquette is mere show. Everywhere you can see much show, hypocrisy, pretended politeness, meaningless formalities and conventions. Nothing emanates from the core of the heart. People lack sincerity and integrity. The utterances of the Mahavakyas of the sages and the valuable teachings of the scriptures will not produce any impression in the minds of passionate, worldly-minded persons. They will be like seeds thrown in rocky soil. They will be like pearls thrown before swine.

If one clearly understands the serious damage that comes through an impure life and determines to attain the goal of life by leading a pure life, he must keep his mind busily engaged in divine thoughts, concentration, meditation, study and service of humanity.

Lack of spiritual Sadhana is the main cause for all sexual attractions. Mere theoretical abstention from sensuality will not bring you good results. You must mercilessly cut off all formalities in social life and lead a pious life freed from the business of bodily existence. Leniency to internal lower tendencies will land you in the region of suffering. Excuse will be of no use in this respect. You must be sincere in your quest for the sublime life of spirituality. Half-heartedness will leave you in your old state of misery.

Wake up, friends, from this mire of illusory Samsara now. Passion has wrought great havoc in you as you are drowned in Avidya. How many millions of fathers, mothers, wives and sons you have had in previous births! This body is full of impurities. What a shame it is to embrace this filthy body! It is mere foolishness only. Give up Moha for this body. Also, give up identification with this body by meditating upon the glory of the Suddha Atman. Give up worship of the body. Worshippers of the body are Asuras and Rakshasas.

Brahmacharya—the need of the hour

My dear brothers! Remember that you are not this perishable body of flesh and bones. You are the immortal, all pervading, Sat-Chit-Ananda Atman. Thou art Atman. Thou art living truth. Thou art Brahman. Thou art absolute consciousness. You can attain this supreme state only by leading a life of true Brahmacharya. The spirit of Brahmacharya must pervade your entire life and all your actions.

People talk of Brahmacharya, but practical men are rare indeed. A life of continence is really beset with difficulties. But the path becomes smooth for a man of iron determination, patience and perseverance. We want real, practical men in the field, men who are practical Brahmacharis, men who can impress people by their strong physique, ideal lives, noble character and spiritual strength. Mere idle talk is of no use whatsoever. We have had enough of idle talkers in the field and on the platforms. Let some practical men come forward and lead the youngsters by their exemplary, lives and spiritual aura. Let me remind you once more! Example is better than precept.

The average life of mankind has shrunk to forty years as against the natural hundred years. Every well-wisher of the country must think over this most disgraceful and disastrous state of affairs very carefully and apply the proper remedies in time. The future well-being of the country rests entirely on the youth. It is the duty of the Sannyasins, saints, teachers, professors and parents to reintroduce the life of celibacy in youngsters. I pray that the educational authorities and the elders will pay their special attention to this vital subject of Brahmacharya for the uplift of the future generation. Training of the youth means nation-building.

The future well-being of India rests entirely on Brahmacharya and Brahmacharya alone. It is the duty of Sannyasins and Yogis to train students in Brahmacharya, to teach Asana and Pranayama and disseminate the knowledge of Atman far and wide. They can do a lot in improving the situation as they are whole-time men. They should come out of their caves and Kutirs for Loka-Sangraha.

If our motherland wants to rise high in the scale of nations, her children, both male and female, should study the important subject of Brahmacharya in all its bearings, understand its supreme importance and observe the great Vrata strictly.

In conclusion, I fervently pray, with folded hands, that you all should sincerely struggle hard to control passion—the enemy of peace and prosperity—by Sadhana. A true Brahmachari is the real mighty emperor of this world. My silent adorations to all Brahmacharins! Glory unto them!

May you be seated firm as the Mahameru in your Satchidananda Svarupa without any impure, lustful thought! May God bless the aspirants with strength and energy for keeping up Brahmacharya! May you, with a pure, stainless mind, unintermittently be in the cognition of your Atmic Reality! May you, without worldly desires and ambition, rest in That which ever is in the midst of the enjoyer and the enjoyed!

May the divine splendour shine in your face! May the divine flame grow brighter in you all! May the divine power and peace abide in you for ever! Om Santi! Santi! Santi!

2. THE WORKING OF THE SEX IMPULSE

Man wishes to have children to maintain the race or line. This is the reproductive instinct. The desire to copulate proceeds from this sexual instinct. The strength of the sexual desire depends upon the sexual impulse.

According to the Gita, impulse is *Vegam* or force. Lord Krishna says, "He who is able to endure here on earth, before he is liberated from the body, the force born of desire and passion, he is harmonised, he is a happy man".

Impulse is a mighty force. It exerts influence on the mind. It is a force suddenly communicated to the mind.

Just as petrol or steam moves the engine, the instincts and impulses move this body. The instincts are the prime movers of all human activities. They give a push to the body and move the Indriyas to action. The instincts create habits. The instinctive impulses supply the driving power by which all mental activities are kept up. These impulses are mental forces. They operate through the mind and the intellect. They mould the life of a man. The mystery of life lies in them.

The attraction towards women in men is born of Rajas. That unknown attraction and happiness in their company is the seed of the sex impulse. This attraction, which is like a bubble in the beginning, later on assumes the form of a formidable, uncontrollable wave of strong passion or sexual appetite. Beware. Generate the spiritual wave of devotion through Japa, Satsanga, meditation and Vichara and kill this attraction in the bud.

You must understand the psychological working of the sex impulse. When there are itches on the body, mere scratching of them is a pleasure. The sex impulse is only a nervous itching. The satisfaction of this impulse begets a delusive pleasure, but it has a disastrous effect on the spiritual well-being of the person.

The flowery bow of Cupid

Lust is powerful. It carries a flowery bow equipped with five arrows, namely, Mohana, Stambhana, Unmadana, Soshana and Tapana—fascination, stupefaction, intoxication, emaciation and burning. One arrow causes fascination in young men when they see a beautiful form. Another arrests their attention. The third intoxicates them. The fourth arrow causes intense attraction towards the form. The fifth arrow inflames and burns their heart. It pierces their cardiac chambers deeply. No one on this earth, nay, in all the three worlds, has the power to resist the potential influence of these arrows. These arrows pierced even the heart of Lord Siva and many Rishis of yore. These arrows induced even Indra to molest Ahalya. Cupid directly shoots an arrow through the bewitching eyebrows and piercing glances of a young lady with tender waist, rosy cheeks and red lips. Moonlit night, scents and perfumes, flowers and garlands, sandal-paste, meat and liquor, theatres and novels are his mighty weapons to delude the passionate young men. Reason and discrimination take to their heels the moment their hearts are

filled with burning passion. They all become absolutely blind. Cupid makes intellectual persons, great orators, ministers and research scholars, doctors and barristers, as pleasure deer or pet dogs in the laps of young ladies. Reason has temporarily taken its seat in the dry intellect of a learned pundit or a professor. He has no real stamina. Cupid knows his strength. Cupid reigns supreme everywhere. He penetrates the hearts of all. He knows how to tickle their nerves. Within the twinkling of an eye he destroys reason, discrimination and understanding by simply inflaming the passion of young men.

Even in dreams Cupid has full sway, even when all the Indriyas are silent. Ladies are his infallible agents! They are always at his beck and call. Cupid operates through their smiles, bewitching glances and sweet words, through their melodious songs and ball dances. Young girls work quickly the ruin of men and can disturb the peace of even the minds of sages. Cupid can make the nervous system of Brahmacharins quiver in the delirium of imaginary pleasure even when they think of the pictures of young, beautiful ladies, even when they hear the gentle sounds of their bracelets and anklets, even when they think of their blooming faces. What to speak of touch then?

The Samskaras in the subconscious mind

A sexual act produces a Samskara or impression in the subconscious mind or Chitta. This Samskara raises a Vritti or thought-wave in the mind and the Vritti again causes a Samskara. Enjoyment thickens the Vasanas. Through memory and imagination, a revival of the sexual desire comes in.

Remembrance of the image of a woman unsettles the mind. When a tiger has once tasted human blood, it always runs to kill human beings. It becomes a man-eater. Even so, when the mind has once tasted sexual pleasures, it always runs after women.

From the bed of Samskaras and Vasanas in the mind emanates Kalpana or imagination through Smriti or memory. Then comes attachment. Along with imagination, emotion and impulse manifest. Emotion and impulse exist side by side. Then comes sexual irritation—craving and burning in the mind and throughout the body. The irritation and burning in the mind percolate into the physical body, just as the water inside a pot percolates into the surface of the pot. If you are very vigilant, you can drive off the bad imagination in the very beginning itself and avert the impending danger. Even if you allow the thief imagination to enter the first gate, keep a careful watch at the second gate when the sexual irritation manifests. You can stop the burning now. You can stop also, easily, the strong sexual impulse from being transmitted to the Indriya itself. Draw the sex energy up towards the brain through Uddiyana and Kumbhaka. Divert the mind. Chant ‘Om’ or any other Mantra with concentration. Pray, meditate. If you still find it difficult to control the mind, immediately seek Satsanga and do not remain alone. When the strong impulse manifests suddenly and is transmitted to the organ, you forget everything and become blind. You become a prey to lust. Later on you repent.

Even in a blind man who is a celibate who has not seen the face of a woman, the sexual impulse is very strong. Why? This is due to the force of Samskaras or impressions of previous

births that are embedded in the subconscious mind. Whatever you do, whatever you think, are all lodged or printed or indelibly impressed in the layers of the Chitta or subconscious mind. These impressions can be burnt or obliterated only by the dawn of knowledge of Atman or the Supreme Self. When the sexual Vasana fills the whole mind and body, the Samskaras assume the form of big Vrittis or waves and torment the poor blind man.

It is easy to control the conscious mind. But it is very difficult to control the subconscious mind. You may be a Sannyasi. You may be a moral man. Mark how the mind behaves or conducts itself in dreams. You begin to steal in dreams. You commit adultery in dreams. The sex impulses, ambitions and low desires are all ingrained in you and deep-rooted in the subconscious mind. Destroy the subconscious mind and its Samskaras through Vichara, Brahma-Bhavana and meditation on 'Om' and its meaning. A man who is established in mental Brahmacharya can never have even a single thought of evil in dreams. He can never have a bad dream. There is a lack of Vichara or Viveka in dream. That is the reason why you get bad dreams, even though you are pure in the Jagrat state through the power of Viveka and Vichara.

An aspirant complains: "As I continue meditation, layer after layer of impurities keep rising from the subconscious mind. Sometimes they are so strong and formidable that I am bewildered as to how to check them. I am not perfectly established in truth and in Brahmacharya. The old habits of lust and of speaking lies are still lurking in me. Lust is troubling me vigorously. The very idea of women agitates my mind. My mind is so sensitive that I am not able to hear or think of them. As soon as the thought comes in the mind, my Sadhana gets disturbed, and also, the peace of the whole day is spoiled. I advise my mind, coax it, frighten it, but it is of no avail. My mind revolts. I do not know how to control this passion. Irritability, egoism, anger, greed, hatred and attachment are still lurking in me. Lust is my chief enemy and it is a very strong one too. I request you to be kind enough to advise me as to how to destroy it".

When the impurities emerge from the subconscious mind and come to the surface of the conscious mind with formidable force, do not try to resist them. Repeat your Ishta Mantra. Do not think of your defects or evil qualities much. It is enough if you introspect and find out your defects. Do not try to attack the evil qualities. Then they will show their long faces. Develop positive virtues. Do not worry yourself often: "I have got so many defects and weaknesses". Cultivate Sattvic virtues. Through meditation, and by the development of positive qualities, through the Pratipaksha Bhavana method, all the negative qualities will die by themselves. This is the right method.

You may become old, your hair may turn gray, but your mind is ever young. The capacity may vanish, but the craving remains even when you have reached advanced senility. Cravings are the real seeds of birth. These craving-seeds give rise to Sankalpa and action. The wheel of Samsara is kept revolving by these cravings. Nip them in the bud. Then only will you be safe. You will get Moksha. Brahma-Bhavana, Brahma-Chintana, meditation on 'Om' and devotion will root out these craving-seeds which are laid deep. You will have to dig them out properly in various corners and burn them beyond resurrection. Then only your efforts will bear the fruit of Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

One student writes to me: "The impure flesh and skin appear to me as very pure and good. I am very lustful. I try to develop mentally the Bhava of mother in all women. I prostrate before a lady mentally, thinking that she is an image of Goddess Kali, and yet my mind is extremely lustful. What shall I do now? I desire again and again to have a glimpse of a beautiful lady". Obviously, Vairagya and discrimination have not dawned in his mind even a bit. The old vicious Samskaras and Vasanas are very powerful.

Even a pure Brahmachari will be troubled in the beginning by curiosity. He will be curious to know and feel what sort of happiness the sexual enjoyment will give. He thinks sometimes: " Let me have the carnal knowledge of a woman once. Then I will be able to root out this sexual impulse and desire completely. This sexual curiosity is troubling me very much". Mind wants to delude this Brahmachari. Maya havocs through curiosity. Curiosity is transmuted into a strong desire. Enjoyment cannot bring satisfaction of a desire. The wise way is to kill the strong wave of curiosity by Vichara or enquiry about that pure sexless Atman, by totally eradicating the sexual desire through constant meditation, and by thinking over the glory of Brahmacharya and the defects of an impure life.

How to gauge your own mental purity

The sight of a young beautiful girl produces in a passionate young man attraction and agitation in the mind, piercing of the heart and serious intoxication. If these symptoms are absent in a man, then it is a sign to denote that he is established in Brahmacharya. The sight of the pairing or mating of birds and animals, or the sight of the bare body of a lady, should not produce the least agitation in the mind.

If a feeling arises in the mind of a Brahmachari for the company of a woman during times of ailment, if there is a strong desire to be in her company, if there is a desire to talk, play and joke with her, if there is a desire to look at young beautiful girls, if the look is unholy and unchaste, and if there is a desire in the mind when there is pain in the body for touch by the hands of females, remember that lust is still lurking in his mind. There is deep sexual craving. This should be destroyed. The old thief is still hiding. Such a Brahmachari must be very careful. He is still within the danger zone. He has not attained the state of purity. Even in dreams there should not arise in the mind any craving for the touch of a female and the company of a woman. One's purity can be gauged by one's experiences in dream. If one is entirely free from any sexual thought in dreams, he has reached the climax of purity. Self-analysis and introspection are indispensable requisites to determine the state of one's mind.

A Jnani will have no wet dreams. He who is established in Brahmacharya will not get even a single bad dream. Dream serves as a criterion to judge our mental state or the degree of our mental purity. If you do not get impure dreams, you are growing in purity.

The very idea of sex should vanish from the mind. Sukadeva had this experience. Suka did not marry. He left his home and roamed about the world at large, stark naked. The separation was very painful for his father, Vyasa. Vyasa went out in search of his son. While he

passed by a tank, the Apsaras, who were freely indulging in play, felt ashamed and put on their clothes hastily. Vyasa said, “Very strange indeed! I am old. I am putting on clothes. But when my son passed this way naked, you kept quiet, you remained unmoved”. The Apsaras replied, “O venerable sage, thy son knows not man and woman, but thou knowest”.

Eradication of lust is no easy task

You will have to search out carefully this dire enemy, lust that lies hidden in the various corners of your heart. Just as the fox hides itself within the bush, so also, this lust hides itself in the substratum and corners of the mind. You can detect its presence only if you are vigilant. Intense self-examination is very necessary. Just as powerful enemies can be conquered only if you attack them from all sides, so also, you can keep the powerful senses under control only if you attack them from all sides, from within and from without, from above and from beneath. The senses are very turbulent. The powerful virus that causes syphilis is attacked on all sides by the doctor by various contrivances such as inunction or local rubbing, injection, mixture and powder. So also, the senses must be controlled by various methods such as fasting, restriction in diet, Pranayama, Japa, Kirtan, meditation, Vichara or enquiry of “Who am I?”, Pratyahara or abstraction, Dama or self-restraint, Asanas, Bandhas, Mudras, thought-control and destruction of Vasanas.

Safeguard yourself against the error of foolishly imagining that you have succeeded in getting rid of lust by the mere fact of having lived a single life for a number of years or experiencing a little feeling of serenity or purity. You must not labour under the delusion that you have eradicated lust completely by adjusting the diet a bit, by practising Pranayama and by doing a little Japa, and that you have nothing more to do. Temptation or Mara may overcome you at any moment. Eternal vigilance and rigorous Sadhana are very essential. You cannot attain perfect Brahmacharya by limited effort. Just as a machine-gun is necessary to kill a powerful enemy, so also, constant, vigorous, powerful Sadhana is necessary to annihilate this powerful enemy, lust. You must not be puffed up with pride for your little achievement in celibacy. If you are put to test, you will hopelessly fail. You must be ever conscious of your shortcomings and you must constantly strive to get rid of them. The highest effort is necessary. Then only you will have sanguine success in this direction.

It is easy to tame a wild tiger or a lion or an elephant. It is easy to play with the cobra. It is easy to walk over the fire. It is easy to devour fire and drink the waters of the ocean. It is easy to uproot the Himalayas. It is easy to get victory in the battlefield. But, it is difficult to eradicate lust. Right from the earlier stages of evolution through the ages, the instinctive urge for reproduction and multiplication has been kept up only by the power of lust. Therefore, despite all efforts at controlling and subduing it, the power tries to manifest itself forcibly and overwhelm the Sadhaka or aspirant.

All the same, you need not despair even a bit. Have faith in God, in His Name and His grace. Lust cannot be completely rooted out of the mind except by the grace of the Lord. You are bound to succeed if you have faith in Him. You can destroy lust in the twinkling of an eye. The Lord makes a dumb man speak and a lame man ascend a steep hill. Mere human effort alone

will not suffice. The divine grace is needed. God helps those who help themselves. If you do total self-surrender, Mother Herself does the Sadhana.

Regular meditation and Japa of a Mantra, Sattvic diet, Satsanga, practice of Pranayama, Sirsha and Sarvanga Asanas, study of religious books, Vichara and seclusion for three months on the banks of any holy river will entirely annihilate lust, however powerful the old Samskaras and Vasanas may be. The positive always overcomes the negative. You need not be discouraged at any rate. Plunge yourself seriously in meditation, kill this Mara, and come out victorious in the struggle. Shine as a brilliant Yogi. Thou art ever-pure Atman. Feel this, O Viswaranjan!

Sexual impulses can, with difficulty, be controlled. A rebellion of the sexual impulses takes place when you attempt to control them. Constant Japa and meditation for a long period are necessary to direct the sex energy into the spiritual channel. Complete sublimation of the sexual energy into Ojas Sakti is necessary. Then only you are perfectly safe. Then only you will be established in Samadhi, as Rasasvad will entirely vanish. Extreme patience, constant vigilance, perseverance and rigorous Sadhana are necessary to eradicate the sexual impulses and attain perfect purity in thought, word and deed.

Brahmacharya or purity can be attained only through constant striving. It cannot be achieved in a day or a week. Lust is doubtless very powerful. It is your deadly enemy. But your most powerful friend is the Name of the Lord. It will destroy lust from its very root. So, always recite and sing, “Ram, Ram, Ram”.

Yogic practices, meditation and so on will attenuate or thin out the sexual desire to a very great extent. But, Self-realization alone can completely destroy or burn the sexual desire and the Samskaras *in toto*. As the Bhagavadgita rightly points out, “The objects of the senses turn away from the abstinent man leaving the longing behind, but this longing also turns away after he attains Self-realization”.

Sex urge is a creative force. Unless you are inspired by spiritual ideals, it is difficult to keep the sexual instinct in check. Direct the sex energy to the higher spiritual channel. It will be sublimated. It will be transformed into divine energy. Complete eradication of lust, however, cannot be done through personal effort. It can be accomplished only by God’s grace.

3. INTENSITY OF THE CRAVINGS IN DIFFERENT PERSONS

Passion is a very strong desire. A mild desire becomes a strong passion by frequent repetition or frequent enjoyment.

In a broad sense, passion means any strong desire. There is passion for service to the country in patriots. There is passion for God-realization in first-class aspirants. In some people, there is a strong passion for novel-reading. There is passion for reading religious books. But generally, in common parlance, passion means lust or a strong sexual appetite. This is a physical craving for sexual or carnal gratification. When any sexual act is repeated very often, the desire becomes very keen and strong. The sexual instinct or the reproductive instinct in man involuntarily prompts him to engage in sexual acts for the preservation of his species.

Passion is the instinctive urge for externalisation through self-preservation and self-multiplication. It is the diversifying power, which is directly opposed to the force that moves towards the integration of being.

Passion is an effect or product of Avidya. It is a negative Vikara in the mind. Atman is ever-pure. Atman is Vimala or Nirmala or Nirvikara. It is Nitya-Suddha. Avidya Sakti has taken the form of passion for keeping up the Lila of the Lord. You will find in the *Chandipath* or *Durga Saptasati*:

Ya Devi Sarvabhuteshu Kamarupena Samsthita
Namastasyai Namastasyai Namastasyai Namo Namah

It means: “I bow to that Devi who has taken the form of passion in all these beings”.

Even Brahma, the Creator, does not know the exact seat wherein passion lies. In the Bhagavadgita, you will find it mentioned that the senses, the mind and the Buddhi are the seats of passion. The Pranamaya Kosa or the vital sheath is another seat. Desire is all-pervading in the body. Every cell, every atom, every molecule, every electron is surcharged with passion. There are undercurrents, cross-currents, inter-currents and submarine currents in the mighty ocean of passion. You must completely annihilate each one of them. You must completely destroy passion in all places.

Passion is a Vritti or modification that arises from the mind-lake when the Rajo-Guna predominates. Rajasic food such as meat, fish and eggs, Rajasic dress and the Rajasic way of living, scents, novel-reading, cinema, talk on sensual things, bad company, liquor, intoxicants of all description, tobacco—all these excite passion.

Passion in children, the youth and the aged

Passion is in a seed state in young boys and girls. It does not give them any trouble. Just as the tree is latent in the seed, so also, passion is in a seed state in the minds of children. In old men and women, passion gets suppressed. It cannot do any havoc. It is only in young men and

women who have reached adolescence that this passion becomes troublesome. Men and women become slaves to passion. They become helpless.

There is not much difference in sex between a male and a female, a boy and a girl, when they are very young. When they attain puberty, there is a drastic change. Feelings, gestures, body, gait, talk, look, movements, voice, qualities and demeanour change altogether.

The whole mango tree—with all its branches, leaves and fruits—is contained in a subtle form in the seed. It takes time for manifestation. Even so, the Vasana of lust lurks in the mind when you are a boy, manifests at eighteen, fills the whole body at twenty-five, works havoc from twenty-five to forty-five and then gradually declines. Various forms of wrong-doing and mischief are committed by human beings between twenty-five and forty-five. This is the most critical period of life.

Sexual thought in sages, spiritual aspirants and householders

In a Jnani, the sexual craving is entirely eradicated. In a Sadhaka, it remains well controlled. In a householder, when not controlled, it does havoc. It exists in him in its fully expanded state. He cannot resist it. He yields to it helplessly on account of his weak will and lack of firm resolution.

In a Jnani or a sage, no sensual thoughts will crop up in the mind. There will not he any difference in feeling when he sees a beautiful young girl, a child or an old lady. He will see the one underlying, eternal, immortal Self in a female and a male. He will not have any difference of feeling when he touches a book, a log of wood, a piece of stone and the body of a female. There is no idea of sex in a Jnani. Such must be the condition of mind of a man who is established in Brahmacharya.

In an aspirant, there will be occasional sexual thoughts, but they are kept under check. They cannot do any havoc in him.

A passionate householder, however, becomes a prey to sexual thoughts. A passionate man of the world wants the constant company of his wife. The idea of sex is ingrained in him. It is very powerful. He wants everything to be done by his wife. Then only he is pleased. This is simply due to passion. After the death of his wife, he never relishes his food, even when it is prepared by expert cooks. Such persons are thoroughly unfit for the spiritual line. When a man feels disgust for the company of a woman and cannot tolerate her company, it is a sign to show the awakening of Vairagya in him.

If you keep lemon juice or tamarind juice in a golden cup, it is not spoiled or tainted. If you keep it in a brass or a copper vessel, it gets spoiled and becomes poisonous. Even so, if there are some Vishaya Vrittis or sensual thoughts in the pure mind of a person who practices constant meditation, they will not pollute the man and induce Vikara or passionate excitement. But if there are sensual thoughts in persons with impure minds, they cause immediate excitement in them when they come across sensual objects.

In the vast majority of persons, the sexual craving is very intense. They have got extreme sexual hankering. In some, the sexual desire occasionally comes, but passes off quickly. There is mere agitation only, of a simple nature in the mind. By the proper method of spiritual Sadhana, this also can be completely eradicated.

Lust in men and in women

Though a lady appears to be gentle and soft, yet she becomes rude, rough and distinctly masculine when she becomes angry. The feminine grace vanishes when she comes under the influence of wrath, indignation, fury and resentment. Have you ever seen women fighting in the streets? Women are more jealous than men. They have more Moha and passion also. They are eight times more passionate than men. Women have more power of endurance. They are more emotional. Males are more rational.

Though females are more passionate, yet they have more power of restraint than males. After enticing men, they keep quiet. The real culprit is man only. He is aggressive. It is he who tastes the ‘forbidden fruit’ first. He is active. He goes out of control and loses his intellect, power of understanding and judgement when he is under the grip of passion and becomes the sporting lap-dog of woman. When once man falls into the trap or net spread out by woman, there is no escape for him.

Woman is passive. She only tempts and deludes man. She inflames and excites the heart of man. She smiles and glances and then keeps quiet. She waits. But man is the aggressor. He is the real culprit.

Man is the worst culprit. He is the real seducer. He is the aggressor. He is the violator. All women would have become Miras, Madalasas and Sulabhas had it not been for this vilest nature of man. He must be corrected and moulded first. He has not got so much self-restraint as women have. Women are eight times more passionate than men, but possess eight times more strength of control over the sexual impulses or the sexual urge. This is the weakness of man, though he may be physically and intellectually more powerful than a woman.

Women flatter, coax and cajole you. They are experts in the art of blandishment. They have made you a slave by their winning expressions, actions, youthful charm, coquettish glances, gestures and smile. A considerable portion of your life has been wasted pursuing the phantoms of flesh. Women appear charming only for a short time, but turn destructive of health and happiness soon after. Beware of these temptresses who entangle you by their blandishments. Pass your remaining days at least on the holy banks of the Ganga in silent Japa and meditation.

The scorpion has the venom in its tail, the cobra in its fangs, the mosquito in its saliva and the scandal-monger in his tongue. Woman has poisoned arrows in her eyes. She sends the message of passion to the lustful youth and pierces their heart through the poisoned arrows that dart from her piercing glances. But, she cannot do any harm to a Viveki who is always on the

alert and who sees the Doshas of a woman and who knows the Sat-Chit-Ananda, pure nature of Atman.

There are tongues and telegraphic instruments in the eyes of young passionate ladies. They send their love shafts and love messages through their smiling glances to passionate young men and thereby allure and bewitch them. Those young men who have no discrimination are excited by these love messages and become a prey to lust. 'They become pleasure-deer or sporting lap-dogs of ladies, though they possess academic education and hold high position and title. What a shame! Reason, will, intellect vanish altogether. O aspirants! Do not be very familiar with any woman. You should not sacrifice a noble ideal of life for the sake of pleasing a bewitching woman. Think of the composition of the body. Keep the mental image of the dead body of a woman or a skeleton whenever passion troubles you. You will slowly gain strength to subdue the passion. Vairagya will slowly dawn. The cause for attraction towards women is the presence of Vasanas or subtle desires in the mind. Wipe them out. There will be no attraction. Those who have renounced women and money have really renounced the world.

4. SEX IS IN IMAGINATION

Sex is the distinction between male and female. It is a mental creation. It is a Kalpana or imagination. There is no sex in the five elements of which the body is composed. The human body is nothing but a combination of the five elements. How, then, has the sex idea come? The sex idea is illusory. It is a trick of the mind. It is jugglery of Maya. It is a notion. The sex-idea is deep-rooted. Man can never think that he is a female. A female can never think that she is a male.

For a liberated sage, this world is full of Brahman only. For a passionate man, this world is full of woman. He falls in love with a wooden post if it is wrapped in a silken gown or a beautiful cloth with attractive borders and a petticoat. Passion is a terrible curse. When a man is under the influence of passion, excitement and the sex impulse or force destroy his understanding and reason, overwhelm his mind and make him utterly helpless.

A householder who has rightly understood the magnitude of the sufferings of Samsara tries to get rid of the Samsaric life. Whereas, a bachelor full of passion imagines that he is very miserable on account of the absence of a wife and children and tries to get married. This is Maya. This is a mental trick. Beware.

A passionate bachelor is ever thinking: "When can I live with a young wife?" A dispassionate householder in whom Viveka has dawned is ever thinking: "When can I disentangle myself from the clutches of my wife and retire into the forests for contemplation on Atman?" You must think over the difference.

Thousands of young graduates and young doctors come to me with earthen pots in their hands, attired in orange-coloured robes, in quest of caves in Uttarakashi and Gangotri for deep meditation and practice of Pranayama. And some young research students in science and some

Rajakumars go to Punjab and Kashmir in silk suits with stiff collars and ties in search of girls for marriage. Is there pleasure or pain in this world? If there is pleasure, why do the young educated men retire into forests? If there is pain, why do young men run after wealth, women and position? Mysterious is Maya! Mysterious is Moha! Try to understand the riddle of life and the riddle of the universe.

Beauty is a mental concept

Maya havocs through the imagination of the mind. Woman is not beautiful, but the imagination is beautiful. Sugar is not sweet, but the imagination is sweet. Food is not palatable, but the imagination is palatable. Man is not weak, but the imagination is weak. Understand the nature of Maya and mind and become wise. Curb this imagination of the mind by Vichara or right thinking and rest in Brahman wherein there is neither imagination nor thought.

Beauty and ugliness are false imaginations of the mind. Mind itself is a false illusory product. Conceptions of the mind also must therefore be false. They are all like a mirage in the desert. What is beautiful for you is ugly for another. Beauty and ugliness are relative terms. Beauty is only a mental concept. It is only a mental projection. It is only a civilized man who talks much of the symmetry of form, good features, graceful gait, elegance of manners and graceful form. An African Negro has no idea of all these things. Real beauty is in the Self only. Beauty resides in the mind and not in the objects. Mango is not sweet; the idea of mango is sweet. It is all Vritti. It is all mental deception, mental conception, mental creation, mental Srishti. Destroy the Vritti; beauty vanishes. The husband stretches his own idea of beauty in his ugly wife and finds her very beautiful through passion. Shakespeare has rightly expressed this in his "Mid-summer-Night's Dream": "Cupid is painted blind. It finds Helen's beauty in the brow of Egypt".

The Indriyas and the mind delude you at every moment. They are your real enemies. Beauty is a product of mental creation. Beauty is a product of the imagination. An ugly woman appears very beautiful only in the eyes of her husband. Where is the beauty, my dear friends, in the wrinkled skin of an old woman? Where is the beauty when your wife is bedridden? Where is the beauty when your wife gets angry? Where is the beauty in the dead body of a woman? The beauty in the face is a mere reflection. The real undecaying Beauty of beauties—the fountain of beauties—can be found in the Atman only. You have ignored the substance and caught hold of a broken piece of glass. What a serious blunder have you committed by your impure thoughts, impure mind, impure Buddhi and impure way of living! Have you realized your mistake? Will you open your eyes at least now?

A beautiful wife is very charming. She is very sweet when she is young, when she smiles, when she puts on beautiful dress, when she sings and plays on the piano or the violin, when she dances in the ballroom. But she is horrible to look at when she loses her temper, when she quarrels with her husband for not getting silk sarees and gold necklace, when she suffers from acute abdominal colic or some such disease and when she becomes old.

For a few years Nature bestows on woman her gift of special beauty, charm and elegance in order that she may capture the hearts of men. Beauty is skin-deep only. It will soon fade, the hair will become gray and the skin will soon be filled with wrinkles. The tailor, the weaver, the embroiderer, the toilet maker and the goldsmith make us beautiful for a few seconds. Man, in his excitement, infatuation and delusion, forgets this point. This is Maya. Never trust this Maya. Beware. O man, wake up! Find out the Beauty of beauties, which is within you, which is your innermost Self. O woman! Sing like Mira and merge in Mira's Girdhar Nagar.

Have you ever paused and considered what constitutes the basic' ladies who excite lust in you? A bundle of bones, flesh, blood, urine, faecal matter, pus, perspiration, phlegm and other dirt! Will you allow such a bundle to become the master of your thoughts? Will you exchange your birthright of eternal peace and happiness for such a fleeting, filthy mess of pottage? Shame on you! Were your will, your reason and your discrimination given to you only for such an inglorious end? Have you not heard and seen that physical beauty is only skin-deep and at the mercy of every passing accident, illness and year?

Misleading descriptions of a woman's beauty

Poets have exaggerated the beauty of ladies. They are misguided persons who put young men on the wrong path. Descriptions like "damsels with bewitching eyes", "face like the moon", "rosy cheeks and honeyed lips" are false and imaginary. Where is the beauty in the dead body, in old women, in sick ladies? Where is the beauty when a lady is infuriated? You are aware of this and yet you cling to their bodies! Are you not confirmed fools! This is due to the force of Maya. How mysterious is the power of Maya and Moha! The beauty of a woman is false, artificial and decaying. Real beauty is undecaying and eternal. The Atman is the source of all beauties. His beauty is everlasting and undecaying. It is ornaments, silken clothing with fanciful borders, dressing of the hair with golden hairpins, flowers, application of powder to their faces, lipstick to the lips and unguent to their eyes that lend a temporary decoration and artificial glittering to the women. Deprive them of their face powders, their ornaments and gaudy dress, and ask them to wear a simple white cloth without any border. Where is the beauty now? The beauty of the skin is a delusion only.

Poets describe in their fanciful, passionate moods that honey flows from the lips of a young, beautiful lady. Is this really true? What do you actually see? The stinking pus from the sockets of the teeth that are affected with dreadful pyorrhoea, the nasty and abdominal sputum from the throat, and foul saliva dribbling on the lips at night—do you call all this as honey and nectar? And yet, the passionate, lustful and sex-intoxicated man swallows these filthy excretions when he is under the sway of excitement! Is there anything more revolting than this? Are not these poets culpable, when they have given such a false description, when they have caused great havoc and damage to passionate young men?

Behind the shining skin there is the raw flesh. Behind the smiles of a young lady are hidden frown and anger. Behind the rosy lips lie germs of diseases. Behind the gentleness and kind words are hidden harsh words and abuses. Life is fleeting and uncertain, O passionate man! Realize the beauty of the Atman in the heart. The body is the abode for diseases. The net of

affection in this world is strengthened by long indulgence. It has entwined its thick knotted twine around your neck.

Minus skin, minus dress, minus ornaments, woman is nothing. Just imagine for a moment that her skin is removed. You will have to stand by her side with a long stick to drive away crows and vultures. Physical beauty is superficial, illusory and fading. It is skin-deep. Do not be deluded by external appearances. It is the jugglery of Maya. Go to the source, Atman, the beauty of beauties, the everlasting beauty.

Passion blinds the intellect

Sexual pleasure is an illusion. It is Bhranti Sukha. It is no real happiness at all. It is mere nerve tickling. All worldly pleasures appear as nectar in the beginning. They become poison in the end. Reflect well, O Saumya, my beloved son! Do not be led away by impulses and passion. Nobody has been benefited in this world by this Maya. People weep in the end. Ask any grown-up householder whether he finds even an iota of happiness in this world.

The fly runs towards the fire or lamp thinking that it is a flower and gets burnt up. Even so, the passionate man runs towards a false beautiful form thinking that he can get there the real happiness and gets himself burnt up in the fire of lust.

Just as the silkworm entangles itself in its self-woven cocoon, so also, you have entangled yourself in the meshes of your own desires. Tear the meshes by the knife of dispassion and soar high in the realm of eternal peace on the wings of devotion and knowledge.

A passionate man is a real blind man. Though he may be an intellectual man, he becomes blind when he is under the sway of sexual excitement. His intellect proves to be of no use when he suffers from this kind of blindness. Pitiable is his lot! Satsanga, prayer, Japa, enquiry and meditation will eradicate this dire disease and bestow on him the eye of wisdom.

There is no sex in the elements. There is mind in the body, which is made up of these elements. There is Kalpana in the mind. And that Kalpana or desire for lust is sex desire. If you kill this mind, which is a bundle of desires, you kill lust and everything. Kill that Kalpana. You will have no lust then. You have killed lust.

The sex idea is a mental creation. The whole Maya or Avidya is nothing but the body-idea or the sex idea. The whole spiritual Sadhana is calculated to destroy this one idea. The extinction of this one idea alone is Moksha!

5. THE DISASTROUS EFFECTS OF SEXUAL INDULGENCE

The most devitalising and demoralizing of pleasures is the sex pleasure. Sensual enjoyment is attended with various defects. It is attended with various sorts of sins, pains, weaknesses, attachments, slave mentality, weak will, severe exertion and struggle, craving and mental restlessness. Worldly persons never come to their proper senses although they get severe knocks, kicks and blows from different corners. The strolling street dog never stops from visiting the houses even though it is pelted with stones every time.

Eminent doctors of the West say that various kinds of diseases arise from the loss of semen, particularly in young age. There appear boils on the body, acne or eruptions on the face, blue lines around the eyes, absence of beard, sunken eyes, pale face with anaemia, loss of memory, loss of eye-sight, shortsightedness, discharge of semen along with urine, enlargement of the testes, pain in the testes, debility, drowsiness, laziness, gloominess, palpitation of the heart, dyspnoea or difficulty in breathing, phthisis, pain in the back, loins, head and joints, weak kidneys, passing urine in sleep, fickle-mindedness, lack of thinking power, bad dreams, wet dreams and restlessness of mind.

Mark carefully the evil after-effects that follow the loss of seminal energy! Persons are physically, mentally and morally debilitated by wasting the seminal power on so many occasions for nothing. The body and the mind refuse to work energetically. There is physical and mental lethargy. You experience much exhaustion and weakness. You will have to take recourse to drinking milk, to eating fruits and aphrodisiac confections, to make good the loss of energy. Remember that these things can never, never repair the loss completely. Once lost is lost for ever. You will have to drag on a dreary, cheerless existence. Bodily and mental strength gets diminished day by day.

Those who have lost much of their Veerya become very irritable. Little things upset their minds. Those who have not observed the vow of celibacy become the slaves of anger, jealousy, laziness and fear. If you have not got your senses under control, you venture to do foolish acts which even children will not dare to do.

He who has wasted the vital energy becomes easily irritable, loses his balance of mind and gets into a state of explosive fury for trifling things. When a man becomes furious, he behaves improperly. He does not know what he is exactly doing as he loses his power of reasoning and discrimination. He will do anything he likes. He will insult even his parents, Guru and respectable persons. It behoves, therefore, that the aspirant who is trying to develop good behaviour must preserve the vital energy. Preservation of this divine energy leads to the attainment of strong will-power, good behaviour, spiritual exaltation, and Sreyas or Moksha eventually.

Excessive sexual intercourse drains the energy enormously. Young men do not realize the value of the vital fluid. They waste this dynamic energy by immoderate copulation. Their nerves are tickled much. They become intoxicated. What a serious blunder they commit! It is a crime that demands capital punishment. They are slayers of Atman. When this energy is once

wasted, it can never be recouped by any other means. It is the most powerful energy in the world. One sexual act shatters completely the brain and the nervous system. People foolishly imagine that they can recover the lost energy by taking milk, almonds and Makaradhvaja. This is a mistake. You must try your level best to preserve every drop although you are a married man. Self-realization is the goal.

The energy that is wasted during one sexual intercourse is tantamount to the energy that is spent in physical labour for ten days or the energy that is utilized in mental work for three days. Mark how precious is the vital fluid, semen! Do not waste this energy. Preserve it with great care. You will have wonderful vitality. When Veerya is not used, it is all transmuted into Ojas Sakti or spiritual energy and stored up in the brain. Western doctors know little of this salient point. Most of your ailments are due to excessive seminal wastage.

Wet dream and voluntary copulation—A vital difference

A sexual act shatters the nervous system. The whole nervous system is shaken or agitated during the act. There is excessive loss of energy. More energy is wasted during coition. But it is not so when emission occurs during the dreaming state. In a wet dream, it may be the outflow of the prostatic juice only. Even if there is loss of the vital fluid, there is not much draining. The actual essence does not come out during wet dreams. It is only the watery prostatic juice with a little semen that is discharged during nocturnal pollutions. When nocturnal emission takes place, the mind which was working in the inner astral body suddenly enters the physical body vehemently in an agitated condition. That is the reason why emission takes place suddenly.

The night discharge may not stimulate the sexual desire. But a voluntary copulation, in the case of a sincere aspirant is highly detrimental to his spiritual progress. The Samskara created by the act will be very deep; and it will intensify or strengthen the force of the previous Samskaras that are already imbedded in the subconscious mind and will stimulate the sexual desire. It will be like pouring ghee in the fire that is slowly getting extinguished. The task of obliterating this new Samskara will be an uphill work. You should completely give up copulation. This mind will try to delude you in a variety of ways by giving wrong counsel. Be on the alert. Do not hear its voice, but try to hear the voice of the conscience or the voice of the soul or the voice of discrimination.

Youth with bloodless faces

A good lot of energy is wasted during copulation. Bad memory, premature old age, impotence, various sorts of eye diseases and various nervous diseases are attributable to the heavy loss of this vital fluid. It is greatly shocking indeed to see many of our youth walking with tottering steps, with pale, bloodless faces owing to loss of this vital fluid, instead of jumping hither and thither with agile, nimble steps with vigour and vitality like the squirrel. Some people are so passionate and weak that even the thought or sight or touch of a woman causes discharge of semen. Pitiable is their lot!

What do we see in these days? Boys and girls, men and women, are drowned in the ocean of impure thoughts, lustful desires and little sensual pleasures. It is highly deplorable indeed. It is really shocking to hear the stories of some of these boys. Many college boys have personally come to me and narrated their pitiable lives of gloom and depression brought about by heavy loss of semen resulting from unnatural means. Their power of discrimination has been lost owing to sexual excitement and lustful intoxication. Why do you lose the energy that is gained in many weeks and months for the sake of the little, momentary sensual pleasure?

6. THE VALUE OF SEMEN

My dear brothers! The vital energy, the Veerya that supports your life, which is the Prana of Pranas, which shines in your sparkling eyes, which beams in your shining cheeks, is a great treasure for you. Remember this point well. Veerya is the quintessence of blood. One drop of semen is manufactured out of forty drops of blood. Mark here how valuable this fluid is!

A tree draws the essence or Rasa from the earth. This essence is circulated throughout the tree, its twigs, branches, leaves, flowers and fruits. The shining colours and life in the leaves, flowers and fruits are due to this Rasa. Similarly, the Veerya that is manufactured by the cells of the testes out of blood gives colour and vitality to the human body and its different organs.

According to Ayurveda, semen is the last Dhatu that is formed out of food. Out of food is manufactured chyle. Out of chyle comes blood. Out of blood comes flesh. Out of flesh comes fat. Out of fat comes bone. Out of bone comes marrow. Out of marrow comes semen. These are the Sapta Dhatus or the seven Dhatus that support this life and body. Mark here how precious is semen! It is the last essence. It is the Essence of essences. The Veerya comes out of the very marrow that lies concealed inside the bones.

There are three divisions in each Dhatu. Semen nourishes the physical body, the heart and the intellect. Only that man who uses the physical body, the heart and the intellect can have perfect Brahmacharya. A wrestler who uses his physical body only, but keeps the intellect and the heart undeveloped, cannot expect to have full Brahmacharya. He can have Brahmacharya of the body only, but not of the mind and the heart. The semen that belongs to the heart and the mind will certainly flow out. If an aspirant does only Japa and meditation, if he does not develop the heart, and if he does not practice physical exercise, he will have only mental Brahmacharya. The portion of the semen, which goes to nourish the heart and the body, will flow out. But an advanced Yogi who dives deep in meditation will have full Brahmacharya even if he does not take physical exercise.

Semen is the quintessence of food or blood. One drop of semen in manufactured out of forty drops of blood according to modern medical science. According to Ayurveda, it is elaborated out of eighty drops of blood. The two testes or seeds that are located in the scrotal bag are called secretory glands. The cells of these testes have been endowed with the peculiar property of secreting semen from the blood. Just as bees collect honey in the honeycomb drop by drop, so also, the cells of the testes collect semen drop by drop from the blood. Then this fluid is

taken by the two ducts or tubes to the vesiculae seminalis. Under excitement, it is thrown out by special ducts, called ejaculatory ducts, into the urethra where it is mixed with the prostatic juice.

Semen is found in a subtle state in all the cells of the body. Just as sugar is all-pervading in the sugar-cane, butter in milk, so also, semen is pervading the whole body. Just as the butter milk is thin after the butter is removed, so also, semen is thinned by its wastage. The more the wastage of semen the more is the weakness. In the Yoga Sastras it is said:

Maranam Bindu Patanat,
Jivanam Bindu Rakshanat.

Falling of semen brings death; preservation of semen gives life. Semen is the real vitality in men. It is the hidden treasure in man. It imparts Brahma-Tejas to the face and strength to the intellect.

Modern medical opinion

Eminent European medical men also support the statement of the Yogins of India. Dr. Nicole says: “It is a medical and physiological fact that the best blood in the body goes to form the elements of reproduction in both the sexes. In a pure and orderly life, this matter is reabsorbed. It goes back into circulation ready to form the finest brain, nerve and muscular tissues. This vital fluid of man carried back and diffused through his system makes him manly, strong, brave and heroic. If wasted, it leaves him effeminate, weak and physically debilitated and prone to sexual irritation and disordered function, a wretched nervous system, epilepsy, and various other diseases and death. The suspension of the use of the generative organs is attended with a notable increase of bodily and mental and spiritual vigour.”

If the spermatic secretion in men is continuous, it must either be expelled or be reabsorbed. As a result of the most patient and persevering scientific investigations, it has been found that whenever the seminal secretions are conserved and thereby reabsorbed into the system, it goes towards enriching the blood and strengthening the brain. Dr. Dio Louis thinks that the conservation of this element is essential to strength of body, vigour of mind and keenness of intellect. Another writer, Dr. E.P. Miller, says: “All waste of spermatic secretions, whether voluntary or involuntary, is a direct waste of the life force. It is almost universally conceded that the choicest element of the blood enters into the composition of the spermatic secretion. If these conclusions are correct, then it follows that a chaste life is essential to man’s well-being.”

Mind, Prana and Veerya

Mind, Prana and Veerya are the three links of one chain. They are the three pillars of the edifice of Jivatma. Destroy one pillar—mind, Prana or Veerya—and the whole building will fall to pieces.

Mind, Prana and Veerya are one. By controlling the mind, you can control Prana and semen. By controlling Prana you can control the mind and semen. By controlling semen, you can control the mind and Prana.

Mind, Prana and Veerya are under the one Sambandha or connection or circuit. If the mind is controlled, Prana and Veerya are controlled automatically. He who suspends or restrains Prana restrains also the working of the mind and the movement of the Veerya. Again, if the Veerya is controlled, and if it is made to flow upwards into the brain by pure thoughts and the practice of Viparita Karani Mudras such as Sarvangasana and Sirshasana and Pranayama, the mind and the Prana are automatically controlled.

The mind is set in motion or rendered active by two things—the vibration of Prana and the Vasanas or subtle desires. Where the mind is absorbed, there the Prana is restrained; and where the Prana is fixed, there the mind also is absorbed. Mind and Prana are intimate companions, like a man and his shadow. If the mind and the Prana are not restrained, all the organs of sensation and action keep actively engaged in their respective functions.

When a man is excited by passion, the Prana is set in motion. Then the whole body obeys the dictate of the mind just as a soldier obeys the command of his commander. The vital air or Prana moves the internal sap or semen. The semen is put into motion. It falls downwards, just as the clouds burst into rain water, just as the fruits, flowers and leaves of the trees drop down by the force of the blowing winds.

If the Veerya is lost, Prana gets unsteady. Prana is agitated. The man becomes nervous. Then the mind also cannot work properly. The man becomes fickle-minded. There is mental weakness.

If the Prana is rendered steady, the mind also becomes steady. If the Veerya is steady, the mind also is steady. If the Veerya is steady, the mind also is steady. If the Drishti or vision is steady, the mind also becomes steady. Therefore, control the Prana, the Veerya and the Drishti.

God is Rasa. *Raso Vai Sah*. Rasa is Veerya, the vital fluid or semen. You can get eternal bliss by the attainment of Rasa or Veerya only. *Rasohyevayam Labdhva Anandi Bhavati.*

Grasp fully the importance and value of this vital essence of life. Veerya is all power. Veerya is all money. Veerya is God. Veerya is Sita. Veerya is Radha. Veerya is Durga. Veerya is God in motion. Veerya is dynamic Will. Veerya is Atma-Bal. Veerya is God's Vibhuti. The Lord says in the Gita: "*Paurusham Nrishu*. I am the seed or virility in men". Veerya is the essence of life, thought, intelligence and consciousness. Therefore, preserve this vital fluid very, very carefully, my dear readers!

SECTION II. THE GLORY OF BRAHMACHARYA

7. THE MEANING OF BRAHMACHARYA

Brahmacharya literally means Achara or conduct that leads to the realization of Brahman or one's own Self. It means the control of semen, the study of the Vedas and contemplation on God. The technical meaning of Brahmacharya is self-restraint, particularly mastery of perfect control over the sexual organ or freedom from lust in thought, word and deed. Strict abstinence is not merely from sexual intercourse, but also from auto-erotic manifestations, from homosexual acts and from all perverse sexual practices. It must further involve a permanent abstention from indulgence in erotic imagination and voluptuous reverie. All sorts of sex anomalies and evil habits of various sorts like masturbation and sodomy must be completely eradicated. They bring about a total breakdown of the nervous system and immense misery.

Brahmacharya is purity in thought, word and deed. It is celibacy and continence. Brahmacharya is the vow of celibacy. The term 'celibacy' is from the Latin '*caelebs*', meaning unmarried or single, and signifies the state of living unmarried. But Brahmacharya is not mere bachelorhood. It includes the control, not only of the sex or reproductive Indriya, but also of all other Indriyas in thought, word and deed. This is the definition of Brahmacharya in a broad sense of the term. The door to Nirvana or perfection is complete Brahmacharya. Complete celibacy is the master-key to open the realms of Elysian bliss. The avenue to the abode of supreme peace begins from Brahmacharya or purity.

Brahmacharya is absolute freedom from sexual desires and thoughts. A real Brahmachari will not feel any difference in touching a woman, a piece of paper or a block of wood. Brahmacharya is meant for both men and women. Bhishma, Hanuman, Lakshman, Mira Bai, Sulabha and Gargi were all established in Brahmacharya.

Mere control of the animal passion will not constitute Brahmacharya. This is incomplete Brahmacharya. You must control all the organs—the ears that want to hear lustful stories, the lustful eye that wants to see objects that excite passion, the tongue that wants to taste exciting things and the skin that wants to touch exciting objects.

To look lustfully is adultery of the eyes; to hear anything that excites passion is adultery of the ears; to speak anything that excites passion is adultery of the tongue.

The eight breaks in Brahmacharya

You should carefully avoid the eight kinds of enjoyment, namely, Darshan or looking at women with passionate resolve, Sparshan or touching them, Keli or play, Kirtan or praising the qualities of the other sex, Guhya-Bhashan or talking in private, Sankalpa or determination, Adhyavasaya or nearing the other sex with the desire for gratification and Kriyanivritti or the actual sexual act. These eight kinds of enjoyment are eight kinds of breaks, so to say, in the current of Akhanda Brahmacharya practice. You must avoid these eight interruptions with great

care, sincere exertion and vigilant circumspection. Only he who is free from all these breaks can be called a true Brahmachari. A real Brahmachari should ruthlessly avoid all these eight breaks.

A Brahmachari should avoid looking at a woman with lustful eyes. He should not have the desire to touch her or go near her with evil intention. He should not play, cut jokes or converse with her. He should not praise a woman's qualities within himself or before his friends. He should not speak to a woman in secrecy. He should not think of women at all. He should not have a carnal desire to have sexual enjoyment. A Brahmachari should, without fail, avoid sexual intercourse. If he breaks any of the above rules, he violates the vow of Brahmacharya.

Though the first seven kinds of Maithuna do not cause the actual loss of semen, yet the semen is separated from the blood and it tries to escape when opportunity arises, either in dreams or in other ways. In the first seven kinds, man enjoys mentally.

Aspirants should not indulge in talk about sex. They should not think about ladies. Bring the image of your Ishta Devata into your mind if the thought of a woman crops up. Repeat the Mantra vigorously.

Lustful look, lustful thinking, wet dreams are all failures or breaks in Brahmacharya. Be chaste in your look. Give up Drishti Dosha or lustful look. A lustful look itself is a break in Brahmacharya. There is internal discharge. Veerya is separated from the system.

See Mother Kali in all women. Cultivate sublime, divine thoughts. Do Japa and meditation regularly. You will be established in Brahmacharya.

Physical Brahmacharya and mental Brahmacharya

It is very necessary that you should be pure in mind if you wish to be a Brahmachari. Mental Brahmacharya is more important. You may succeed in physical Brahmacharya, but you must succeed in mental Brahmacharya also. That state of mind wherein no single sexual thought enters the mind is termed mental Brahmacharya. If thoughts are impure, the sex impulse will be very strong. Brahmacharya depends upon regulating the whole course of life.

When you cannot control the lustful thoughts, at least control the physical body. Physical Brahmacharya must be strictly practiced at first. Control the body when the sex impulse troubles you. Mental purity or mental Brahmacharya will gradually manifest.

Surely it is better to control the Karma Indriyas at least than to indulge actually in sensual pleasures. Gradually the thoughts will be purified if you persist in your Japa and meditation. Eventually there will be direct control of the mind also.

A sexual act, a sexual contact, revives all bad ideas and gives them a new lease of life. Therefore, the body should be controlled first. Physical Brahmacharya must be maintained first. Then only you can achieve mental purity and mental Brahmacharya.

You may be able to stop copulation for months and years, but there should not be any sexual craving or attraction for women. Evil thoughts also should not arise when you look at a woman, when you are in the company of women. If you succeed in this direction, then you are established in perfect Brahmacharya. You have crossed the danger zone.

Thought is the real action. An evil desire is tantamount to adultery. The desire is more than the act. But, there is a great deal of difference between the actual shooting of a man and thinking to shoot a man, between actual copulation and thinking to have intercourse with a woman. Philosophically speaking, thinking to shoot a man or thinking to have copulation is the real act.

Even if there is a single impure sexual thought in the mind, you can hardly expect to have strict mental Brahmacharya. You cannot then be termed as Oordhvaretas or one in whom the seminal energy flows upwards towards the brain for being stored up as Ojas Sakti. There is a tendency for the semen to flow downwards even if there is a single impure thought.

The state of mental Brahmacharya must be kept up even amidst temptations and sickness. Then only you are safe. The senses begin to revolt during times of ailment and also when you come in contact with sense objects.

If thoughts of a lustful nature manifest in your mind, it is due to hidden passion. The cunning diplomatic mind seeks silent gratification by looking at a lady and talking to her. Mental Maithunam takes place secretly or unconsciously. The force that drags you is hidden passion.

The sex energy has not been sublimated thoroughly. The vital being or Pranamava Kosa has not been regenerated and purified perfectly. This is the reason why impure thoughts enter your mind. Do more Japa and meditation. Do selfless service in some form for the society. You will soon attain purity.

Learn to cleanse your mind with the water of purity or celibacy, with the soap of divine love. How can you expect to become pure internally by merely washing the body with soap and water? Internal purity is more important than external purity.

Continue the life of Brahmacharya. Herein lies your spiritual progress and realization. Do not give a new lease of life to this dire enemy lust by repetition of the sinful act.

Keep the mind fully occupied. Intense musing on the objects of sense does more harm to the inner spiritual life than actual sense-gratification. If the mind is not rendered pure by Sadhana, mere mortification of the external senses will not produce the desired effect. Although the external senses are mortified, their internal counterparts, which are still energetic and vigorous, revenge upon the mind and produce intense mental disturbance and wild imagination.

It is the mind that really does all actions. A desire arises in your mind and then you think. Then you proceed to act. The determination of the mind is put into action. First there is Sankalpa or thought and then comes action. Therefore, do not allow the sexual thoughts to enter the mind.

No space is empty at any time. This is the law of nature. If one thing is removed from a place, immediately another comes in to take its place. The same law holds good in the case of the inner mental world also. Therefore, it is necessary to entertain sublime divine thoughts to replace evil thoughts. As you think, so you become. This is the immutable psychological law. The vicious mind is gradually divinised by entertaining divine thoughts.

A common complaint

There is always a complaint amongst men that they do not get good success in Brahmacharya despite their earnest efforts and sincere practices. They get unnecessarily alarmed and discouraged. It is a mistake. There is a thermometric registration in the spiritual realm also. It is very subtle. The spiritual thermometer registers or indicates the advancement in mental purity even to the minutest degree. You want a Visuddha Buddhi or pure intellect to comprehend the degree of purity. Intense Sadhana, burning Vairagya and burning Mumukshutva or desire for liberation bring on the highest degree of mental purity quickly.

Even if anyone repeats the Gayatri or the Pranava for just half an hour, the spiritual thermometer registers at once a minute degree of Brahmacharya or purity. You are unable to note it on account of your Malina Buddhi or impure intellect. Do Sadhana regularly for one or two years and then compare your state of mind with that of the previous year. You will surely find a vast change. You will experience or feel more calmness, more purity, more inner moral force or strength. There is no doubt of this. Because the old vicious Samskaras are very powerful, it takes some time for mental purification. You need not be discouraged. *Nil desperandum*. Never despair. You have to fight against the Samskaras of Anadi Kala or beginningless time. Therefore, a great deal of exertion is needed.

8. THE GLORY OF BRAHMACHARYA

There cannot be any language without vowels. You cannot draw a picture without a canvas or a wall. You cannot write anything without paper. Even so, you cannot have health and spiritual life without Brahmacharya. Brahmacharya brings material progress and psychic advancement. It is the basis for morality. It is the basis for eternal life. It is a spring flower that exhales immortality from its petals. It is the substratum for a life of peace in Atman. It is the firm support for Brahma-Nishtha, which is eagerly longed for by sages, aspirants and Yogic students. It is the shield for waging war against the internal Asuras—lust, anger and greed. It serves as a gateway to the bliss beyond. It opens the door of Moksha. It contributes to perennial joy, to the uninterrupted and undecaying bliss. Even Rishis, Devas, Gandharvas and Kinnaras serve at the feet of a true Brahmachari. Even Isvara applies to his forehead the dust of the feet of a genuine celibate. Brahmacharya is the only key to open the Sushumna and awaken Kundalini. It brings glory, fame, virtue and Mana-Pratishtha. The eight Siddhis and the nine Riddhis roll under the feet of the true celibate. They are ever ready to obey his command. The Lord of Death flees from him. Who can describe the magnanimity, majesty and glory of a true Brahmachari!

Brahmacharyena Tapasa Deva Mrityumupagnata. The Vedas declare that by Brahmacharya and penance the Devas have conquered death. How did Hanuman become a Mahavir? It is with this weapon of Brahmacharya that he acquired unsurpassable strength and valour. The great Bhishma, the grandfather of the Pandavas and the Kauravas, conquered death by Brahmacharya. It is only Lakshman, the ideal Brahmachari, who put down Meghanada, the man of inestimable prowess, the conqueror of the three worlds, the son of Ravana. Even Lord Rama could not face him. It is through the force of Brahmacharya that Lakshman was able to defeat that invincible Meghanada. The valour and greatness of emperor Prithviraj was due to the strength of Brahmacharya. There is nothing in the three worlds that cannot be attained by a Brahmachari. The Rishis of yore knew fully well the value of Brahmacharya and that is the reason why they sang in beautiful verses about the glory of Brahmacharya.

Just as the oil comes up in a wick and burns with glowing light, so also, the Veerya or semen flows up by the practice of Yoga Sadhana and is converted into Tejas or Ojas. The Brahmachari shines with Brahmic aura in his face. Brahmacharya is the bright light that shines in the house of the human body. It is the blossomed flower of life around which the bees of strength, patience, knowledge, purity and Dhriti wander about humming hither and thither. In other words, he who observes Brahmacharya will be endowed with the above qualities. The scriptures declare emphatically:

"*Ayustejo Balam Veeryam Prajna Sreescha Yashastatha*
Punyamcha Sat-Priyatvamcha Vardhate Brahmacharyaya"

By the practice of Brahmacharya, longevity, glory, strength, vigour, knowledge, wealth, undying fame, virtues and devotion to the truth increase.

Secret of health and longevity

Pure air, pure water, wholesome food, physical exercise, outdoor games, walking with brisk steps, rowing, swimming, light games like tennis—all contribute to the maintenance of good health, strength and a high standard of vitality. There are indeed many ways to gain health and strength. These ways are doubtless indispensably requisite. But, Brahmacharya is the most important of all. Without Brahmacharya, all your exercises are nothing. It is the master-key for opening the realms of health and happiness. It is the corner-stone of the edifice of bliss and unalloyed felicity. It is the only specific that keeps up true manliness.

The preservation of semen is the secret of health and longevity, and of all success in the physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual planes. He who has even a little bit of Brahmacharya will tide over a crisis of any disease very easily. If it takes a month for an ordinary man for recovery, this man will be completely all right in a week.

The Srutis declare a full life or age of one hundred years for a man. This you can attain only by the establishment of Brahmacharya. There are instances of men who have attained longevity and intellectual powers despite their loose, immoral ways. But they would have been still more powerful and brilliant had they possessed a good character and continence as well.

After Dhanvantari had taught all the details about Ayurveda to his disciples, they enquired about the keynote of this medical science. The Master replied, “I tell you that Brahmacharya is truly a precious jewel. It is the one most effective medicine—nectar indeed—which destroys diseases, decay and death. For attaining peace, brightness, memory, knowledge, health and Self-realization, one should observe Brahmacharya, which is the highest Dharma. Brahmacharya is the highest knowledge; Brahmacharya is the greatest strength. Of the nature of Brahmacharya is verily this Atman and in Brahmacharya It resides. Saluting Brahmacharya first, the cases beyond cure, I cure. Aye, Brahmacharya can undo all the inauspicious signs.”

Practice of Brahmacharya gives good health, inner strength, peace of mind and long life. It invigorates the mind and the nerves. It helps to conserve physical and mental energy. It augments memory, will force and brain power. It bestows tremendous strength, vigour and vitality. Strength and fortitude are obtained.

The eye is the window of the mind. If the mind is pure and calm, the eye also is calm and steady. He who is established in Brahmacharya will have lustrous eyes, a sweet voice and a beautiful complexion.

Celibacy promotes concentration

By the establishment of continence, vigour is obtained. The Yogi gets Siddhi or perfection by attaining perfect mental and physical Brahmacharya. Brahmacharya helps him in gaining divine knowledge and other Siddhis. When there is purity, the rays of the mind are not dissipated. Focussing of the mind becomes easy. Concentration and purity go together. Although a sage talks a few words only, a deep impression is produced in the minds of the hearers. This is due to his Ojas Sakti, which is conserved by the preservation of semen and its transmutation.

A true Brahmachari in thought, word and deed has wonderful thought-power. He can move the world. If you develop strict celibacy, Vichara Sakti and Dharana Sakti will develop. Vichara Sakti is the power of enquiry. Dharan’a Sakti is the power of grasping and holding the Truth. If a man persistently refuses to yield to his lower nature and remains a strict celibate, the seminal energy is deflected upwards to the brain and is stored up as Ojas Sakti. Thereby the power of the intellect is intensified to a remarkable degree. The intellect becomes sharp and clear by continence. Continence increases infinitely the power of retentive memory. The strict celibate has keen and acute memory even in old age.

A man who has the power of Brahmacharya can turn out immense mental, physical and intellectual work. He has a magnetic aura around his face. He can influence people by speaking just a few words or even by his very presence. He can control anger and move the whole world. Look at Mahatma Gandhi! He had acquired this power by constant and careful practice of Ahimsa, Satyam and Brahmacharya—non-violence, truth and celibacy. He influenced the world through this power alone. Through Brahmacharya and Brahmacharya alone can you get physical, mental and spiritual advancement in life.

It is worth repeating that a true Brahmachari possesses tremendous energy, a clear brain, gigantic will-power, bold understanding, retentive memory and good Vichara Sakti. Swami Dayananda stopped the carnage of a Maharaja. He broke the sword with his hands. This was due to his power of Brahmacharya. Jesus, Sankara, Jnana Deva and Samarth Ramdas were all Brahmacharins.

Have you realized, my dear friends, the importance of Brahmacharya? Have you recognised, my dear brothers, the true significance and glory of Brahmacharya? How can you expect to be strong and healthy if the energy that is acquired through various means with great difficulty and at great price is wasted daily? It is impossible to be strong and healthy unless males and females, boys and girls, try their level best to keep up Brahmacharya or the vow of celibacy.

Even among electrons, there are bachelor electrons and married electrons. Married electrons manifest in pairs. Bachelor electrons exist singly. It is these bachelor electrons only that create magnetic force. The power of Brahmacharya is seen in electrons also. Friend, will you learn some lessons from these electrons? Will you practice Brahmacharya and develop power and spiritual force? Nature is your best teacher and spiritual guide.

Through Brahmacharya get over the miseries of mundane life and attain health, strength, peace of mind, endurance, bravery, material progress, psychic advancement and immortality. One who has a perfect control over the sexual energy attains powers unobtainable by any other means. Therefore, dissipate not thy energy in sensual pleasures. Conserve thy energy. Do noble deeds and practice meditation. You will soon become a superman. You will commune with God and attain Divinity.

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9. IMPORTANCE OF CELIBACY IN SPIRITUAL LIFE

Brahmacharya is a divine word. It is the sum and substance of Yoga. Through Avidya, this is forgotten. The importance of Brahmacharya was emphasised by our great Rishis. It is the supreme Yoga, which Lord Krishna emphasises repeatedly in His “Immortal Song”. In Chapter VI, Sloka 14, it is very clearly stated that the vow of Brahmacharya is necessary for meditation: *Brahmacharivrate Sthitah*. In Chapter XVII, Sloka 14, He says that Brahmacharya is one of the requisites for the austerity of the body. Now, we have another statement made in Chapter VIII, Sloka 11, that Yogis practice Brahmacharya in order to attain the goal spoken of by the Knowers of the Vedas. A similar statement is also found in the Kathopanishad.

In the Raja Yoga of Patanjali Maharshi also, Yama is the first step. Yama is the practice of Ahimsa, Satya, Asteya, Brahmacharya and Aparigraha—non-killing, truthfulness, non-stealing, celibacy and non-receiving of gifts. Among these Brahmacharya is the most important.

In Jnana Yoga too, Dama or self-control is the foundation for the student.

In the Mahabharata again, you will find, in the Santi Parva: "Many are the branches of Dharma, but Dama is the basis of them all'.

Brahmacharya is the vital subject for those who want success in material or spiritual life. Without it, a man is absolutely unfit for worldly activities as well as for spiritual practices.

Celibacy in the different religious orders

Down the ages, the highest stress has been laid on Brahmacharya or sexual abstinence in every religion. Throughout folklore runs the idea that second-sight and the vision of the supernatural are especially, if not solely, the privilege of the celibates. Westermack favours the explanation that pollution destroys holiness. A tribe on the Rio Negro enjoined celibacy upon their Shamans, because they believed that medicine would prove ineffectual if administered by a married man.

Lambichus states that the gods do not hear him who invokes them if he is impure from sexual connections. In Islam, strict continence is required on the pilgrimage to Mecca. It is required for the Hebrew congregation during the theophany at Sinai and before entering the temple. Ancient India, Egypt and Greece enforced the rule that the worshipper must abstain from intercourse during and before worship. In Christianity, continence was required as a preparation for both baptism and Eucharist.

The highest type of Christian was a celibate. Christian teachers praised celibacy, and marriage came to be, in their eyes, only a secondary good for those who were unable to serve continence. The bishops of the Greek Church are always celibates, being chosen from the monks.

The monk, who lowers himself to touch a woman's person with corrupt thoughts, while he clasps her hand or clasps her hair or touches one part or another of her body, brings shame and degradation on the order. The present ordination vow is to abstain from all sexual intercourse as long as life shall last.

The Jains force on their Munis the rule to abstain from all sexual relations; not to discuss topics relating to women, not to contemplate the forms of women. Lust is thus condemned: "Of the myriad vices, lust is the worst."

There are other rules subsidiary to this, forbidding all actions of an unchaste kind, especially any act or word which might either lead to a breach of the principal rule or give rise to an impression that it was not being strictly observed.

A Bhikshu is not to sleep in any place where a woman is present, or to preach the sacred doctrine in more than five or six words to a woman unless a grown-up man be present, or to exhort the sisters unless specially deputed to do so, or to journey along the same route with a woman. On his round for alms, he is to be properly clad and he is to walk with downcast eyes. He is not to accept a robe from any woman not related to him, except under specified conditions.

He is not to sit in a secluded place with a woman, much less to touch or speak to her with impure intent.

The Buddhist "Order of Mendicants" was governed by the 227 rules of the Patimokha. Of these, the first four were of specific gravity. A breach of any one of the four rules involved expulsion from the order; and they were, therefore, called the Parajika or the rules as to acts involving defeat.

The first rule says: "Whatsoever Bhikshu—who has taken upon himself the system of self-training and rule of life, and has not thereafter withdrawn from the training or declared his inability to keep the rule—shall have carnal knowledge of any living thing, down even to an animal, he has fallen into defeat, he is no longer in communion". "Withdrawn from the training" was the technical expression for throwing off the robes, retiring from the order, and returning to the world, a step which any member of the order was at liberty to take at any time.

Numa was said to have instituted the "Order of Vestal Virgins". They remained unmarried for thirty years. Burial alive was the penalty for breaking the vow of chastity. The Virgins were distinguished by extraordinary influence and personal dignity. They were treated with marks of respect usually accorded to royalty; thus, on the streets, they were preceded by a lictor and the highest magistrates made way for them. They enjoyed sometimes the exceptional privilege of riding in a carriage; at public games, a place of honour was assigned to them. And after death they, like the imperators, were allowed to be buried within the city, because they were above the laws. They enjoyed the royal privilege of mercy, for if they met a criminal on his way to execution, his life was spared.

In the large colony of Tibetans at Darjeeling, several hundreds of the men doing coolies' work are ex-lamas who fled from Tibet, with their paramours or singly, in order to escape the severe penalties attaching to their breach of celibacy. The delinquent is denounced, and if caught, is subject to corporal chastisement in public, as well as to a heavy fine and expulsion from the order in disgrace.

The Peruvian "Virgins of the Sun"—a type of priests—were punished with living burial if detected in misconduct.

Brahmacharya—the foundation of spiritual life

Brahmacharya is a *sine qua non* of spiritual life. It is a great desideratum. It is of vital importance. Without perfect Brahmacharya, you cannot have substantial spiritual progress.

Abstinence or continence is the corner-stone on which the pedestal of Moksha stands. If the corner-stone is not very strong, the superstructure will fall down when there is heavy rain. Even so, if you are not established in Brahmacharya, if your mind is agitated by evil thoughts, you will fall down. You cannot reach the summit of the ladder of Yoga or the highest Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

There is no hope for you to have Self-realization or Knowledge of the Self if you are not well established in Brahmacharya. Brahmacharya is the master-key to open the realms of eternal bliss. Brahmacharya is the very foundation of Yoga. Just as a house that is built on a rotten foundation will surely fall down, so also, you will fall down from your meditation if you have laid no proper foundation, namely, the attainment of perfect Brahmacharya. You may meditate for, a period of twelve years, and yet, you will have no success in Samadhi if you have not destroyed the subtle lust or the craving-seed that lingers in the innermost recesses of your heart.

Brahmacharya is the basis for the attainment of Kaya Siddhi. Complete celibacy must be observed. This is of paramount importance. By the practice of Yoga the semen becomes transmuted into Ojas Sakti. The Yogi will have a perfect body. There will be charm and grace in his movements. He can live as long as he likes. This is also known as Iccha Mrityu or death at will.

The practice of Brahmacharya is the most important qualification for the spiritual aspirant, no matter what his chosen path may be—Karma Yoga, Upasana, Raja Yoga, Hatha Yoga or Vedanta. The discipline of complete abstinence is demanded from all aspirants. A true Brahmachari only can cultivate Bhakti. A true Brahmachari only can practice Yoga. A true Brahmachari only can acquire Jnana. Without Brahmacharya, no spiritual progress is possible.

Lust deals a deadly blow to the spiritual calibre of man. It is not possible for you to enter the spiritual path that leads to union with God unless and until you control lust and become established in Brahmacharya. As long as lust smells sweet in your nostrils, you cannot entertain sublime, divine thoughts in your mind. That man in whom the sex idea is deep-rooted can never dream of understanding Vedanta and realising Brahman even within Sata Koti Janma, even within one hundred crores of births. Truth cannot dwell where passion lives.

Sexual indulgence is a great obstacle in the spiritual path. It bars spiritual practices definitely. The sexual urge must be controlled by entertaining sublime thoughts and regular meditation. There must be complete sublimation of the sexual energy. Then only the aspirant is absolutely safe. The total annihilation of the sexual desire is the ultimate spiritual ideal.

Sex attraction, sexual thoughts and sexual urge are the three great obstacles in the path of God-realization. Even if the sexual urge vanishes, the sex attraction remains for a long time and troubles the aspirants. Sex attraction is very, very powerful. Sex attraction binds one to this world. Each cell in the body of a male or a female is surcharged with the sex element. The mind and the senses are filled with sex juice. Man cannot remain without looking at a woman, without talking to her. He derives pleasure in the company of a woman. Woman also cannot remain without looking at a man, without talking to him. She derives pleasure in the company of a man. That is the reason why he or she finds it extremely difficult to annihilate the sex attraction. Sex attraction cannot be destroyed without the grace of the Lord. No human effort can eradicate *in toto* this mighty force of sex attraction.

The organ of sight does great mischief. Destroy the lustful look, the adultery of the eye. Try to see God in all faces. Again and again generate the currents of dispassion, discrimination

and enquiry. Eventually you will be established in Brahman or the Eternal. Again and again generate sublime divine thoughts and increase your Japa and meditation. The sexual thought will be annihilated.

Of what avail is knowledge of the arts and sciences, of what avail is reputation or titles, of what avail is repetition of the Lord's Name or meditation or enquiry of "Who am I?", if you become a slave of lust? Control this strong urge first by the rigorous penance of sense-control. Before you take to advanced meditation, first become at least a strict physical celibate. Then endeavour to have perfection in mental chastity.

Amongst you all, there may be a hidden Shakespeare or a Kalidasa, a hidden Wordsworth or a Valmiki, a potential saint, a St. Xavier, an Akhanda Brahmachari like Bhishma Pitamaha, a Hanuman or a Lakshman, a Visvamitra or a Vasishtha, a great scientist like Dr. J.C. Bose or Raman, a Yogi like Jnana Deva or Gorakhnath, a philosopher like Sankara or Ramanuja, a Bhakta like Tulsidas, Ramdas or Eknath.

Awaken, then, your hidden faculties, potential energies of all description, through Brahmacharya and attain God-consciousness quickly and get over the miseries of this mundane life with its concomitant evils of birth, death and sorrow.

Blessed is the Brahmachari who has taken the vow of celibacy till the end of life. Twice blessed is that Brahmachari who is sincerely struggling to destroy lust and attain perfect purity. Thrice blessed is that Brahmachari who has completely rooted out lust and has attained Self-realization. Glory be to such exalted Brahmacharins! They are veritable gods on earth. May their blessings be upon you all.

10. BRAHMACHARYA FOR HOUSEHOLDERS

It is beyond all doubt that a life of Brahmacharya is glorious and marvellous. At the same time, a life of moderation in the household life is equally good and helpful for spiritual growth. Both have their own advantages. You must have great strength to tread the path either way.

Varnashrama Dharma is practically extinct now. Everyone is a Vaisya or a Bania with greed for accumulation of wealth by hook or by crook, by begging, borrowing or stealing. Almost all Brahmins and Kshatriyas are Banias or Vaisyas only. There is no real Brahmin or Kshatriya in these days. They want money anyhow. They do not attempt to practice the Dharmas of their caste or order of life. This is the fundamental cause for the downfall of man. If the householder discharges strictly the duties of his stage of life, if he is an ideal Grihasthi, there is no necessity for taking Sannyasa. The swelling up in the number of Sannyasins at the present moment is due to the failure of the householders in the discharge of their duties. The life of an ideal householder is as much difficult and rigid as that of an ideal Sannyasin. Pravritti Marga or the path of Karma Yoga is as much difficult and rigid as that of Nivritti Marga or the path of renunciation.

If a man leads a life of celibacy even in his householder's life and has copulation occasionally for the sake of progeny only, he can bring forth healthy, intelligent, strong, beautiful and self-sacrificing children. The ascetics and savants of ancient India, when married, used to follow this excellent rule very carefully and also used to teach, by practice and precept, how to lead the life of a Brahmachari even as a householder. Our ancestors indeed followed the ascetics in creating progeny for the defence of the motherland and for other ennobling works of the nation. Those who have read Srimad Bhagavata know the lives of Devahuti, daughter of Manu, and her husband Kardama Rishi. Kapila Muni, founder of the Sankhya philosophy, was born of Devahuti after Kardama Rishi visited her once to give her a son. Parasara visited Matsyagandhi to bring forth Sri Vyasa, founder of the Vedanta philosophy.

Great Rishis of yore were married, but they did not lead the life of passion and lust. Their life of Grihasthashram was a life of Dharma only. If it is not possible for you to emulate them to the very letter, you will have to keep their lives before you as landmarks, as an ideal for emulating, and you must tread the path of Truth. Grihasthashram is not a life of lust and loose living. It is a strict life of selfless service, of Dharma pure and simple, of charity, goodness, kindness, self-help, and all that is good and all that is helpful to humanity. If you can live such a life, the life of a Grihasthi is as good as the life of a Sannyasin.

What is Brahmacharya in married life?

Lead a well-regulated, moderate married life. Even as a householder you can be a Brahmachari, by sticking to the principles of Grihastha Dharma, by moderation and regular worship of God. Marriage should not in any way lead you downwards in your spiritual path. You should keep the spiritual fire ever blazing. You should make your wife also understand the real glory of a spiritual life. If both of you observe Brahmacharya for sometime and then avoid excesses, she will give birth to robust children who will be the pride of the country. Conserved energy can be used for higher spiritual purposes. Prevention of frequent maternity will preserve your wife's health too.

Brahmacharya in Grihasthashrama is absolute moderation in sexual intercourse. Householders are allowed to visit their wives once in a month at the proper time without the idea of sexual enjoyment just to get progeny to keep up the line. This is also Brahmacharya Vrata. They are also Brahmacharins.

Householders should ask their wives also to observe fasts and to do Japa, meditation and other practices, which will enable them to keep up this Brahmacharya Vrata. They should train their wives also in the study of the Gita, the Upanishads, the Bhagavata and the Ramayana and in diet regulation.

If you want to practice Brahmacharya, think and feel that your wife is your sister. Destroy the idea of husband and wife and develop the idea of brother and sister. You both will develop pure and strong love, because the impurity of lust will be removed. Talk to your wife always on spiritual matters. Narrate to her stories from the Mahabharata, the Bhagavata. Sit with her on holidays and read some religious book. Gradually her mind will be changed. She

will take interest and delight in spiritual practices. Put this into practice if you want to get rid of the miseries of Samsara and enjoy the eternal bliss of the Soul.

Young men of the present day imitate Westerners in taking their wives always with them when they go out. This practice creates a strong habit in men for having the company of women at all times. A little separation brings a great deal of pain and suffering. Many get a shock when they lose their wives. Further, it becomes very difficult for them to take a vow of celibacy even for a month. Poor, miserable weaklings! Spiritual bankrupts! Try to be away from your partners in life as much as you can. Talk little with them. Be serious. Do not laugh or joke with them. Go along for an evening walk. What did your wise forefathers do? Assimilate from the West only what is good. Vile imitation in fashion, style, dress and food is dangerous.

When the wife becomes the mother

As soon as a son is born to you, your wife becomes your mother, because you yourself are born as the son. A son is nothing but the energy of the father. Change the mental attitude. Serve your wife as the World Mother. Start spiritual Sadhana. Destroy passion. Every morning, as soon as you get up from bed, touch your wife's feet and prostrate before her taking her for Kali or the World Mother. Do not feel ashamed. This practice will remove the idea of 'wife' from your mind. If you cannot do the prostration physically, at least do it mentally.

As soon as a child is born, man must give up lust. He must observe celibacy. He must treat his wife as his own mother. When once this thought is brought foremost in the mind, how can he, even when the child dies, change his mental outlook and think of his wife with a lustful look? This is a great Sadhana for the householder. If a child is not born, it is not advisable to marry a second wife. Both husband and wife may then pursue the spiritual path jointly, observing celibacy.

Living a life of spiritual partnership

Says Manu: "The first-born child is born of Dharma and the rest of Kama or lust. The sexual act for mere pleasure is not justifiable". Thirsty aspirants who are treading the path of Self-realization, who are householders above forty years of age, should give up contact with their partners in life. Because, a sexual contact revives all bad ideas and gives them a new lease of life. Marriage should now be considered a God-ordained holy alliance of two souls for the complete divinization of their nature and for realising the goal of life—God-realization—through a well-ordered Dharmic Grihastha life. The husband and the wife should, from now on, observe perfect physical Brahmacharya, if they want rapid spiritual progress and Self-realization in this very birth. There are no half-way measures in the spiritual path.

Are you a householder above forty years of age? Then, you must become a perfect Brahmachari now. Your wife also must observe fast on Ekadasi. Do not say now, "Swamiji, what can I do? I am a householder". This is a lame excuse. How long do you want to remain as a passionate householder? Is it till the end of life? Is there not a nobler mission in life than eating, sleeping and procreating? Do you not want to enjoy the eternal bliss of the Self? You have

tasted enough of the mundane pleasures. You have passed the stage of a householder. I can excuse you if you are a young man, but not now. Now get ready for the stage of Vanaprastha and mental Sannyasa while remaining in the world. Colour your heart first. This will be a noble life indeed. Prepare yourself. Discipline the mind. Real Sannyasa is mental non-attachment. Real Sannyasa is destruction of Vasanas, 'I-ness', 'mine-ness', selfishness and Moha for children, body, wife and property. You need not retire into the Himalayan caves. Attain the above state of mind. Live in the world with family and children amidst peace and plenty. Be in the world, but be out of the world. Give up worldliness. This is real Sannyasa. This is what I really want. Then you will become a King of kings. I am shouting at the top of my voice like this for many years, but only very few persons follow my teaching.

A good wife, a worthy jewel, is the materialisation of the Lord's infinite grace for one who treads the Pravritti Marga. Harmony in every walk of life is a rare gift of the Lord to a couple. Each partner should be to the other a true companion in every sense of the term. Grihastha Ashrama is a safe rung in the ladder of evolution to Godhead. Follow the scriptural laws and enjoy infinite bliss. True union can be established on the spiritual basis. Both of you should aspire to realize the common goal of life—God-realization. When the couples who live around you vie with one another in materialism, and in their individual capacity, to drag each other down, both of you should compete with each other in advancing rapidly in spiritual Sadhana. What a novel competition! What a blessing it is to have such a competitor as the life-partner!

11. WOMEN AND BRAHMACHARYA

An aspirant writes: "I would like to know whether the same theory regarding the formation of Veerya and loss of the same holds good in the case of women also. Are they actually affected to the same extent as men?" The question is an important and pertinent one. Yes, indulgence in the sexual act is exhausting to the female system and a drain upon the vitality as in man. The nervous strain it imposes on the system is very great indeed.

The female gonads, the ovaries corresponding to the testes in the males, produce, develop and mature precious, vital force like semen. This is the ovum. Though the woman does not actually lose this out of her body, as in the case of semen in man, yet, due to the sexual act, it leaves the ovaries and is taken up in the process of conception to form the embryo. And one knows only too well what a strain and drain on strength child-bearing is to a woman. Repeated depletion of this force and the strain of childbirth makes wrecks of healthy ladies, and works havoc with their strength, beauty and grace as well as their youth and mental power. Eyes lose the lustre and sparkle that are indicative of the inner forces.

The intense sensuous excitement of the act shatters the nervous system and causes debility too. Their system being more delicate and high-strung, females are often more affected than men.

Women should preserve their precious vital force. The ovum and the hormones secreted by the ovaries are very essential for the maximum physical and mental well-being of women.

Women also should observe the vow of celibacy. They also can remain as Naishthic Brahmacharinis like Mirabai and devote themselves to the service and devotion of God. Or they can do Brahma-Vichara like Gargi and Sulabha. They will be styled as Brahma-Vicharinis, enquirers of Brahman, if they adopt this path.

Grihastha-Dharminis or householders among women should observe Pativrata-Dharma or the vow of chastity and should keep Savitri, Anasuya, as their ideal. They should see Lord Krishna in their husbands and realize God, like Laila in Majnu. They also can practice all the Kriyas such as Asanas and Pranayamas. They should do vigorous Sankirtan, Japa and prayer daily in their houses. Through Bhakti, they can easily destroy passion, because by nature they are devotional.

Many women of yore had done miraculous deeds and shown to the world the power of chastity. Nalayini, by the power of chastity, stopped the rising of the sun to save her husbands's life. Anasuya turned the Trimurtis—Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesvara—into babies when they wanted Nirvana Bhiksha. It is through the power of chastity only that she was able to turn the great deities into babies. Savitri brought back the life of Satyavan, her husband, from the noose of Yama, by her chastity. Such is the power of chastity or Brahmacharya. Women who lead an ideal householder's life with chastity can also become like Anasuya, Nalayini or Savitri.

Brahmacharinis—ancient and modern

In olden days, there were Brahmacharinis in India. They were Brahmavadinis; they discoursed on Brahman. They did not wish to lead the life of Grihastha-Dharminis devoted to a householder's duties. They served the Rishis and sages in their hermitages and did Brahma-Vichara or enquiry of Brahman. King Janasruti placed his daughter at the service of Rishi Raikva. You will find this in the Chhandogya Upanishad.

Sulabha was a very learned lady. She was born in a royal family. She was a Brahmacharini. She was instructed in the religion of emancipation. She observed the practice of asceticism. She was firm in the practices that belonged to the mode of life she led. She was steady in her vows. She never uttered a word without reflecting on its propriety. She was a Yogini. She led the life of a Sannyasini. She appeared before Janaka in his court and had a great discussion with him on Brahma-Vidya or the Science of the Self.

Gargi was also a Brahmacharini. She also was a highly cultured lady. She also had a lengthy discussion with Yajnavalkya on Brahma-Vidya. The dialogue between them comes in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.

In Europe also there were many women who were celibate and who dedicated their lives entirely to severe austerity, prayer and meditation. They had their own hermitages. In India,

even at the present moment, there are educated women who lead the life of Brahmacharinis. They do not wish to marry. This is due to the force of good Samskaras of previous births. They give education to the girls in schools. They give free tuition privately to poor girls and train them in sewing and other household works. They study religious books and practice meditation in the morning and in the evening. They do Kirtan. They keep a daily spiritual diary. They conduct Satsanga classes and Kirtan among women. They train girls in the practice of Asanas and Pranayama. They give discourses on the Gita and the Upanishads. They deliver lectures on the religious subjects in English, Sanskrit and Hindi. During holidays and on important occasions, they hold religious conferences for ladies on a grand scale for mass spiritual awakening.

Sometimes they visit nearby villages and distribute medicines freely to the poor. They are equipped with the knowledge of first-aid, homoeopathy, allopathy and the bio-chemical system of medicine. They are trained in nursing the sick. There is a highly educated Brahmacharini, who is well-versed in Sanskrit, English and Hindi, who is the head of an institution for girls. She maintains a free private school also for poor girls at her own expense. This is a very noble service indeed.

Such girls and women are really a blessing to India. They lead a life of purity and self-sacrifice. They enjoy bliss, prosperity and renown here and will also attain the immortal abode of supreme peace hereafter. India is in need of more Brahmacharinis of this description who can dedicate their lives to service, meditation and prayer.

There was a Maharani in the erstwhile United Provinces who wore simple dress, ate simple food, served Sadhus and poor people and always lived amongst Sannyasins. She had a sound knowledge of the scriptures and she did regular meditation and prayer. She observed Mouna or the vow of silence for months together and spent some time in seclusion and ruled her state also.

There is an educated woman who is an M.B.B.S. Her husband is holding a good position. She treats the patients freely. She does not charge any fees for visiting. She does very good service to the society. She is not a job hunter. She is free from greed. She does medical service for the purification of her heart. She regards medical service of the poor people as worship of God. She looks after the house and serves her husband. She studies religious books and spends sometime in meditation, worship and prayer. She is an ideal woman who leads a glorious and pious life.

Loose life is not freedom

The world is in dire need of such ideal women. I wish that the world may abound with such glorious women. I do not condemn women. I do not oppose giving them education and freedom. I have the highest veneration for women. I adore them as Devis or goddesses. But, I am not in favour of such freedom for women as will ruin them. I am in favour of such education and culture as will make them - immortal and glorious, as will make them ideal women like Sulabha, Mira and Maitreyi, like Savitri and Damayanti. This is what I want. This is what everybody would like.

Loose life is not perfect freedom. Some women of India have ruined themselves by taking advantage of this false freedom. There is no limit to the freedom, which the so-called educated woman enjoys now. This freedom has caused many homes to be wrecked. It has created disorders in society. It has brought shame on many respectable families. The girls, in their insatiable craving for freedom, have overstepped the limit and lost that priceless possession which the women of the past could keep untarnished.

By mixing with men freely, woman loses her dignity, modesty, feminine grace, and the sanctity of her person and character. A woman who mixes freely with men cannot preserve her chastity for long. There can be, and there have been, exceptions. A woman who mixes with men freely in public life and yet remains pure must be certainly superhuman. An ordinary woman with her natural passion will soon succumb. Human nature will fulfil itself.

What is there in a woman's life if her purity is lost? She is only a living corpse if there is no purity, although she may be rolling in wealth and moving in high circles in society. Promiscuous mixing will lead to disastrous results. Even Rishis and Yogins who are clad in rags, who live on roots in seclusion, will be pulled down by the dark forces of nature if they are careless. Then what to speak of women who eat daily dainties and sweetmeats, who are clad in perfumed velvet and silk with lace borders, who are given to too much mixing, who do not lead a life of self-control, who have no religious training and discipline, who have no idea of the inner life and the religion of emancipation? O wise reader! I leave this for your own consideration, reflection, cogitation and deliberation.

Women should not do anything that can bring dishonour or infamy on them and their family, and a blot on their character. Without character, a man or a woman is considered as dead while living. Women should be very careful and cautious when they move in society. They should avoid too much talking, too much mixing, guffaw and giggling. They should always walk in a dignified manner and not with the swinging of the hips. They should never look at men with a flitting gesture. Clothes should not be too tight or revealing. Abandon make-up.

A call to spiritual life

O Devis! Do not waste your lives in fashion and passion. Open your eyes. Walk in the path of righteousness. Preserve your Pativrata Dharma. See Divinity in your husband. Study the Gita, the Upanishads, Bhagavata and Ramayana. Become good Grihastha-Dharminis and Brahma-Vicharinis. Bring forth many Gourangas. The destiny of the world is entirely in your hands. You are holding the master-key of the world. Open the door of Elysian bliss. Bring Vaikuntha in your home. Train your children in the spiritual path. Sow the spiritual seed when they are young.

O Devis of the world! Should you not strive for the higher life, the grand, the sublime, the only real life in the Soul? Is it sufficient if you are satisfied with the petty material necessities of life on earth? Do you remember what Maitreyi said to Yajnavalkya? "What shall I do with the wealth of this whole world if thereby I would not become immortal?" said she to her

husband. How many ladies of this world will be bold enough to assert this wise saying of the Upanishadic ideal of a woman?

To chain themselves with the bondage of Samsara is not the birthright of the mothers and sisters of the world. To get stuck up in family, children and relatives is not the ideal of courageous and discriminative women. Every mother of the world should realize her responsibility to awaken herself, her children, her family and her husband, to the true light, and splendour of spiritual life. What a glorious mother was Madalasa! Did she ask her children to study up to the post-graduate examination, and then seek for some employment? "*Suddhosi, Buddhosi, Niranjanosi, Samsara Maya Parivarjitosi*—You are pure, you are consciousness, you are taintless, you are devoid of the Maya of Samsara"—such was the Advaitic instruction which Madalasa gave to her children when she rocked them in the cradle. How many mothers of the present-day world have got the fortune to teach their children such profound knowledge? On the other hand, the present-day mothers would try to crush the spiritual tendency of their children even if it is found in them in a microscopic state! What a sad and pitiable condition! Wake up, O mothers, sisters! Wake up from your deep sleep. Recognise your responsibility. Spiritualise yourselves. Spiritualise your children. Spiritualise even your husbands, for you are the makers of the family! Remember how Chudala illumined her husband. You are the makers of the nations! You are the builders of the world! Therefore, spiritualise yourselves. Assert in yourselves the spirit of Sulabha, Maitreyi, Gargi. Do not be cowardly. Come out of your fleshy homes—the homes of delusion, the homes of vanity!

Be you all real Sannyasinis and bring real glory, real greatness, for that is real boldness and courage, that is real wisdom and understanding. A woman is not a woman if she is devoid of spiritual fire in her, if she is ignorant of a higher life in the Soul. A woman's duty is not merely family; her duty is also to transcend the family. Her duty does not lie in sans, bangles, jackets, powders and scents. Her duty does not lie in getting employment for her children. Her duty is also concerned with the Self, the Atman, the Brahman. Such a woman is a real symbol of God. She is to be adored, she is to be worshipped!

12. BRAHMACHARYA AND THE EDUCATIONAL CURRICULUM

If you compare the present system of education with our ancient Gurukul system, there is a wide gulf between the two. In the first place, the present system of education is very costly. The moral side of education is absolutely ignored at the present moment. Every student in the Gurukul was pure. Every student, had perfect moral training. This was the predominating feature of ancient culture. Every student had a knowledge of Pranayama, Mantra Yoga, Asanas, the code of morals, Gita, Ramayana, Mahabharata and the Upanishads. Every student possessed humility, self-restraint, obedience, a spirit of service and self-sacrifice, good demeanour, politeness, a courteous nature, and last but not the least, a desire to acquire Atma-Jnana.

A vital drawback in the present educational system in India

The college students of the present day do not possess any of the above virtues at all. Self-control is a thing unknown to them. Luxurious living and self-indulgence begin from their very boyhood. Arrogance, impertinence and disobedience are deep-rooted in them. They have become confirmed atheists and rank materialists. Many are ashamed to say that they believe in the existence of God. They have no knowledge of Brahmacharya and self-control. Fashionable dress, undesirable food, bad company, frequent attendance at the theatres, and the cinema, and applying Western manners and customs have rendered them weak and passionate. Brahma-Vidya, Atma-Jnana, Vairagya, the wealth of Moksha and Atmic peace and bliss are quite foreign to them.

Fashion, style, epicureanism, gluttony and luxury have occupied their minds. It is very pitiable to hear the life-history of some of the college students. In the ancient Gurukul, boys were healthy and strong and lived long. It has indeed been detected that the health of the students has deteriorated throughout India. Moreover, the vices and bad practices that are ruining their health are on the increase. There is no ethical culture in modern schools and colleges. In the present system, the moral side of education is absolutely ignored.

Modern civilization has enfeebled our boys and girls. They lead an artificial life. Children beget children. There is racial degeneration. The cinema has become a curse. It excites passion and emotion. Nowadays, in the cinema, vulgar scenes and immoral plays are enacted even when they show stories from the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. Again I have to reiterate with force that the present system of education in India needs a thorough drastic overhauling immediately.

Any system of education, which is not based on the principles of Brahmacharya, and has not in its curriculum a compulsory study of Sanskrit literature, will not be good for the Hindus. It is bound to fail! Those who are responsible for giving them a proper system of education are ignorant on this important point; and hence the numerous unfortunate experiments in education.

Professors of some colleges insist on the students putting on fashionable dress. They even dislike students who wear clean but simple clothing. A great pity! Cleanliness is one thing and fashion is another thing. The so-called ‘fashion’ takes root in worldliness and sensuality.

Cleanliness of life is very necessary for physical and spiritual growth. Boys and girls suffer in silence on account of ignorance, on account of misuse of bodily parts which constitutes a definite drain upon the vitality. This retards normal mental and physical progress. When ‘the human system is deprived of its natural secretions, there must be a corresponding decline in nervous energy. This is the reason why functional disorders develop. The number of wrecks is increasing.

Young boys suffer from anaemia, bad memory and debility. They have to discontinue their studies. Diseases are increasing. Thousands of injections have come into the pharmacy, hospitals and dispensaries. Thousands of doctors have opened their clinics and shops. Yet,

misery is increasing day by day. People do not get success in their enterprises and business. What is the reason for this? The reason is not far to seek. It is because of wastage of the vital force or semen through evil habits and immoderate sexual intercourse. It is because of an unclean mind and an unclean body.

Duty of teachers and parents

A great and onerous duty rests with the teachers and professors of schools and colleges to train the students in the path of Sadachara or right conduct and to mould their character properly. Brahmacharya includes character-building or right moulding of character. They say that knowledge is power. But I assert boldly, with great assurance and practical experience, that character is power and that character is far superior to knowledge even.

Every one of you should endeavour your level best to mould your character properly. Your whole life and your success in life depend entirely upon the formation of your character. All the great persons in this world have achieved their greatness through character and character alone. The brilliant luminaries of the world have won their laurels of fame, reputation and honour through character and character alone.

The teachers themselves should be strictly moral and pure. They should be endowed with ethical perfection. Otherwise, it will be like the blind leading the blind. Before taking to the profession of a teacher, every teacher should feel the high responsibility of his position in the educational line. Mere intellectual achievement in the art of delivering dry lectures will not suffice. This alone will not adorn a professor.

When students reach the age of maturity, certain growths and changes take place in the physical body. The voice changes. New emotions and sentiments arise. Naturally, the youngsters become curious. They consult the street boys. They get ill advised. They ruin their health by vile habits. A clear knowledge of sexual health, hygiene and Brahmacharya, of how to attain longevity and how to control passion, should be imparted to them. Parents should teach their children the various stories from the Mahabharata and the Ramayana that relate to Brahmacharya and right conduct.

Parents should advise their children, often and often, on the subject of Brahmacharya. This is their imperative duty. Candid talks to the boys and girls are very necessary when they begin to show signs of puberty. It is no use beating about the bush. Matters that relate to sex should not be kept hidden. It will be only false modesty if the parents feel shy to talk to their children on this important subject. Silence will only excite the curiosity of the adolescent children. Whereas, if they can understand these things clearly in time, surely they will not be misguided by evil companions and they will not develop bad habits.

Teachers and parents should give proper instructions to the boys and girls as to how they should lead a clean life of Brahmacharya. They should get rid of their false sense of modesty and shame. They are a good deal responsible for the ignorance of the boys and girls. There has been more suffering caused by ignorance of these matters than by anything else. You are paying the

price of ignorance, of the false modesty that matters of sex and sexual physiology should not be discussed. The teachers and parents should diligently watch the conduct of the youngsters and clearly impress on their mind the vital importance of a clean life of Brahmacharya and the dangers of an unclean life. Pamphlets on Brahmacharya should be freely distributed to them.

Magic lantern demonstrations on the subject of Brahmacharya, on the lives of Brahmacharins of yore, on the stories of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, should be regularly conducted in the schools and colleges. This will be a great help in elevating and inspiring the students to a high moral standard.

O teachers and professors! Wake up now! Train the students in the path of Brahmacharya and righteousness and morality. Make them true Brahmacharins. Do not neglect this divine work. You are morally responsible for this onerous task. This is your Yoga. You can have Self-realization if you take up this work in right earnest. Be true and sincere. Open your eyes now. Explain to the boys and the girls the importance of Brahmacharya and instruct them in the various methods by which they can preserve the Veerya, the soul-force or Atma-Sakti that is hidden in them.

Teachers who have disciplined themselves first should hold private talks with students and give them regular practical lessons on Brahmacharya. Rev. H. Packenham Walsh, who was principal of the S.RG. College, Tiruchirappali, a few decades ago, and who later became a bishop, used to hold regular talks with his students on the subject of Brahmacharya and self-control.

The future destiny of the world rests entirely with the teachers and students. If the teachers train their students in the right direction, in the path of righteousness, the world will be filled with ideal citizens, Yogis and Jivanmuktas, who will radiate light, peace, bliss and joy everywhere.

Blessed is he who truly endeavours in making his students true Brahmacharins. Twice blessed is he who tries to become a real Brahmachari. May the blessings of Lord Krishna be upon them. Glory to the teachers, professors and students.

13. SOME IDEAL BRAHMACHARINS

Hanuman

Hanuman was born of Anjana from Pavana, the wind-god. He was named Hanuman after the name of the city Hanuman over which his maternal uncle Parti Surya ruled. Hanuman's body was as hard as stone. So, Anjana named him Vajranga. He is also known by the name Mahavir or mightiest hero, because he exhibited several heroic feats. His other names are Balabhima and Maruti.

The world has not yet seen, and will not see in the future also, a mighty hero like Sri Hanuman. During his lifetime he worked wonders and exhibited superhuman feats of strength and valour. He has left behind him a name which, as long as the world lasts, will continue to wield a mighty influence over the minds of millions of people.

Hanuman is one of the seven Chiranjivis. He is the only learned scholar who knows the nine Vyakaranas or sciences of granunar. He learnt the Sastras from the sun-god. He is the personification of Brahmacharya. He is the wisest of the wise, the strongest of the strong and the bravest of the brave. He is the Sakti or energy of Rudra. He who meditates on Hanuman and repeats his name attains power, strength, glory, prosperity and success in life. Hanuman is worshipped in all parts of India, particularly in Maharashtra.

Hanuman had the power to assume any form he liked, to swell his body to an enormous extent and to reduce it to the length of a thumb-nail. His strength was superhuman. He was the terror of the Rakshasas or demons. He was well-versed in the four Vedas and other sacred book's. His valour, wisdom, knowledge of the scriptures and superhuman strength attracted everybody who came near him. He had extraordinary skill in warfare.

Hanuman was the chosen messenger, warrior and servant of Sri Rama. He was a votary and devotee of Lord Rama. Rama was his all-in-all. He lived to serve Rama. He lived in Rama. He lived for Rama. He was a minister and intimate friend of Sugriva.

Hanuman was born on the morning of the 8th of the lunar month, Chaitra, on the most blessed day, Tuesday. From his very birth, Hanuman exhibited extraordinary physical strength and worked many miracles. When he was a child, he jumped up at the sun and caught hold of him to eat. All the gods were very much troubled. They came with folded hands to the child and humbly entreated him to release the sun. The child set free the sun at their request.

A Rishi pronounced a curse on. Hanuman for his wrong action that he would remain unconscious of his great strength and prowess till he met Sri Rama and served Him with devotion. Hanuman saw Sri Rama for the first time in Kishkinda. Sri Rama and Lakshmana came there in the course of their search for Sita whom Ravana had carried away. As soon as Hanuman beheld Sri Rama, he became quite conscious of his own strength and power.

Hanuman burnt the whole of Lanka and brought news of Sita to Rama. In the great war between Rama and Ravana, Hanuman killed many heroes of the Rakshasa army. He did many superhuman acts. Carrying a big mountain and other great activities were nothing for Hanuman. All those were due to the power of Brahmacharya.

When the great war was over, Vibhishana was installed on the throne of Lanka. The time of banishment was over. Sri Rama, Lakshmana, Sita and Hanuman sat on the Pushpaka Vimana or aeroplane and reached Ayodhya in time. The coronation ceremony of Lord Rama was celebrated with great eclat and pomp. Sita presented a necklace of pearls to Hanuman.

Glory to Hanuman, the blessed devotee of Lord Rama. Glory, glory to Sri Anjaneya, the mighty hero, undaunted warrior and learned Brahmachari, the like of whom the world has not yet seen and will not see in all time to come.

May we derive inspiration from Hanuman's ideal life of Brahmacharya! May His blessings be upon you all. Let us sing His glory:

Jaya Siya Ram Jaya Jaya Siya Ram
Jaya Hanuman Jaya Jaya Hanuman
Jaya Siya Ram Jaya Jaya Siya Ram
Jaya Hanuman Jaya Jaya Hanuman

Sri Lakshmana

Lakshmana, the son of Dasaratha by his second queen Sumitra, was the younger brother of Sri Rama. He was an Avatara of Adisesha. He was the constant companion of Rama both in pleasure and in pain. Rama and Lakshmana lived, dined, played and studied together. One could not bear the separation of the other. Lakshmana was a loving servant also of Sri Rama. He carried out Sri Rama's commands to the very letter. He lived in perfect obedience to Sri Rama.

Lakshmana had pure and untainted brotherly love. His object of life was service to his elder brother. Obedience to the commands of his brother was the motto of his life. He would not do anything without getting Rama's permission. He regarded Sri Rama as his God, Guru, father and mother. He followed Rama as a shadow.

He was quite unselfish at heart. He abandoned all the comforts of a royal life willingly only for the company of his brother. He served Rama's cause in all possible ways. He made Rama's cause his own. He sacrificed every personal consideration on the altar of brotherly love. Sri Rama was his all-in-all. Lakshmana could relinquish anything, his life even, for the sakc of Rama. He abandoned in a moment his mother, his wife and his royal comforts to follow Sri Rama and Sita in exile. What a magnanimous soul! What a great Tyagi he was! Here is an unprecedented example, in the history of the whole world, of a disinterested, noble and devoted soul who lived only to serve his brother. That is the reason why the readers of Ramayana eulogize Lakshmana for his pure and unique love towards his brother. Some eulogize Bharata,

while others speak very highly of Hanuman, but Lakshmana was in no way inferior to Bharata or Hanuman.

Lakshmana followed Sri Rama for the long period of fourteen years though he was perfectly aware of the dangers of the forest. He accompanied Rama with his bow and arrow, though his help was not required by Visvamitra. It was all due to his devotion and love towards his brother Sri Rama.

Sri Rama also had intense love for Lakshmana. When Lakshmana fell down unconscious by the fatal arrow of Meghanada, Rama's heart was broken. He wept bitterly. He made a determination not to revisit Ayodhya when he lost his dear brother. He said, "A wife like Sita can be had, but a real devoted brother of the type of Lakshmana cannot be had again. The world is nothing for me without my brother."

Lakshmana was pure in thought, word and deed. He led the life of an ideal Brahmachari during the fourteen years of exile. He never looked at the face or body of Sita. His eyes were ever directed towards her lotus-like feet only. When Sugriva brought Sita's cloak and jewels—which, while she was being carried away, she had allowed to fall on the earth, seeing the monkeys on the mountain—Rama showed them to Lakshmana and asked whether he recognized them. Lakshmana said:

Naham Janami Keyure Naham Janami Kankane
Nupura Eva Janami Nityam Padabhivandanat

"I do not recognise the bracelets or ear-rings; I know only the anklets, for I worshipped her feet alone." See how Lakshmana revered Sita as mother or Goddess.

Meghanada, the son of Ravana, had conquered even Indra, the lord of gods. By virtue of this victory, Meghanada also came to be known as Indrajit. He had a boon of being invincible to all except to one who could abstain from all sorts of sensual enjoyments as least for a full fourteen years. He was unconquerable. But Lakshmana destroyed him by the power of his purity, by the power of Brahmacharya.

O Lakshmana! We shall ever sing thy glory and repeat, "*Ram Lakshman Janaki, Jai Bolo Hanuman Ki!*" Introduce us to our beloved Lord Rama, thy dear brother and master. Help us also in holding communion with Lord Rama. O Lakshmana! Be ever merciful to those neophyte Sadhakas who grope in the darkness of ignorance! Teach us the secret of success and help us in becoming staunch celibates till the end of our lives. Once again, salutations to thee, O Lakshmana, the darling of Sumitra and the apple of Sri Rama's eyes!

Bhishma

Bhishma's father was Santanu, who was the ruler of Hastinapura. His mother was Ganga Devi. His early name was Devavrata. He was an incarnation of Vasu Devata.

One day Santanu went into the forests, close to the banks of the Yamuna, for hunting. He came across a handsome maiden. He said to her, “Who are you? What are you doing here?” She replied, “I am the daughter of Dasaraja, the fisher-chief. My name is Satyavati. I am engaged at his command in rowing the boat for taking passengers across the river”.

King Santanu wanted to marry her. He went to Dasaraja and asked his consent. The fisher-chief replied, “I am quite willing to give my daughter to you in marriage. But, first, I want you to give me a promise”.

The king replied, “O Dasaraja, what is that? I will certainly do what lies in my power”. The fisher-chief said, “The son born of my daughter should succeed you”.

Santanu did not wish to give this pledge to the fisher-chief, because his valiant and intelligent son Devavrata, whom he loved intensely, would have to abandon the throne. He would no longer be the heir apparent. But the fire of love for the maiden burnt him. He was in a great dilemma. He grew pale and did not take any interest in the affairs of the state. He opened his heart to the chief minister whom he trusted, but the latter was not able to advise him in the matter. Santanu tried to conceal his love for the maiden from his son Devavrata.

Devavrata was wise and was very strong. He suspected something and thought that his father was unhappy. He said to his father, “O beloved father! You are prosperous. You have got everything. There should be no cause for your anxiety. Why are you cheerless now? You are losing your vigour and strength. Kindly let me know the reason for your grief. I am ever ready to do what lies in my power to remove it.”

The king replied, “O beloved Devavrata! You are my only son. If any calamity falls on you, I will become sonless. I will be deprived of heaven. You are equal to a hundred sons. Therefore, I do not want to marry again. But one son is no son according to the words of the Rishis. These thoughts are troubling me in my mind”.

Thereupon, Devavrata, accompanied by the old minister and many respectable Kshatriya chiefs, went to Dasaraja and pleaded on behalf of his father. He asked him to give his daughter to his father in marriage.

The fisher-chief replied, “O amiable prince! I have already told your father about the condition on which I can give, my daughter in marriage to him”.

Devavrata said, “O fisher-chief! I make a solemn declaration now that the son that may be born of this girl shall succeed my father to the throne. I shall do all that you wish”.

The fisher-chief said, “I highly appreciate your noble character and high ideal. But your sons may expel my daughter’s son at any time at their sweet will. I entertain a grave doubt on this point”.

Devavrata prayed, "O Truth! Dwell in me for ever. Come and pervade my whole being! Give me inner strength to stick to the vow of perfect celibacy that I am going to take now in the presence of these people!". He then resolutely said to the fisher-chief, "O Dasaraja! Listen to what I say. From today, I shall lead a life of strict Naishthika Brahmacharya till the end of my life. All the women of the world are my mothers. I am the most devoted and loyal subject of the King of Hastinapura. If I die sonless, I shall yet attain the abode of eternal bliss and immortality".

From heaven at that time, the celestial damsels, the gods and the assemblage of sages showered flowers on him and said, "This is verily Bhishma, the Terrible!".

The fisher-chief said, "O prince! I am quite ready now to give my daughter in marriage to your father". Thereupon, the fisherman and his daughter accompanied Devavrata to the palace of Santanu. The old minister informed the king about all that had happened. The monarchs who assembled in the hall greatly appreciated the extraordinary spirit of self-sacrifice and renunciation of Devavrata and said, "Devavrata is really Bhishma, the Terrible". Since then, Devavrata bore the name of Bhishma. King Santanu was immensely pleased with the noble conduct of his son and conferred upon him the boon of death at will. He said, "May the gods protect you! Death shall never come to you as long as you wish to live".

What an exalted soul! This noble example is an unprecedented one in the history of the world. No one save Bhishma, on the surface of this earth, had made such a great sacrifice for the sake of filial duty at such a young age. Bhishma's filial duty and piety might very well be compared to that of Lord Rama.

Bhishma was very firm, in his principles. He was absolutely free from the slightest tinge of selfishness. He was an embodiment of self-denial and self-sacrifice. His power of endurance and patience in all the difficult trials he met with, were marvellous and unprecedented. He was matchless in fortitude and courage. All men honoured him. All the Kshatriya chiefs paid their homage to him. He was a mighty Yogi and a sage. He was above body consciousness. He rested in his own Satchidananda Svarupa. That is the reason why he was peaceful and serene even though he was pierced by sharp arrows all over his body. Lying on the bed of sharp arrows which was as soft as a bed of flowers to him, he gave wonderful discourses on political, philosophical, religious, social and moral subjects to Yudhishthira. Have you ever heard of anyone, save Bhishma, in the history of the world, who was able to give lofty and sublime discourses on his deathbed? Bhishma laid his life for others. He lived to serve and elevate others. The noble life led by the high-souled Bhishma of mighty will-force still inspires sterling virtues in those who study his discourses in the Santi Parva. Bhishma died long, long ago, but his voice in the Santi Parva and his ideal and exalted life awaken slumbering people to action, righteousness, duty and enquiry, rigorous Tapas and meditation, to this day.

Glory to Bhishma, whose exemplary life of Brahmacharya inspires our hearts even today and elevates our minds to magnanimous heights of divine glory and splendour.

SECTION III. TECHNIQUES OF SEX SUBLIMATION

14. SUPPRESSION AND SUBLIMATION

In the Practice of Brahmacharya, what is wanted is elimination of lust, but not suppression. Suppression of the sex urge is not eradication. You can never be free of that which is suppressed. The suppressed sex desire will attack you again and again and will produce wet dreams, irritability and restlessness of mind.

Repression or suppression of the sexual desire will not help you much. If lust is suppressed, it will again manifest with redoubled force when a suitable opportunity arises, when the will becomes weak, when Vairagya wanes, when there is slackening in meditation or Yogic Sadhana, when you become weak owing to an attack of disease.

Do not try to run away from women. Then Maya will chase you terribly. Try to see the Self in all forms and repeat the formula "*Om Ek Sat-Chit-Ananda Atma*" very often. Remember that Atman is sexless. Mental repetition of this formula will give you strength.

Ignorant people adopt foolish methods to kill the Indriyas. They fail eventually. Many foolish aspirants amputate the organ of reproduction. They think that lust can be eradicated by such a procedure. What a great foolish act! Lust is in the mind. If the mind is subdued, what can this external fleshy organ do? Some swallow tons of nux vomica to kill this organ. They fail in their attempts to be centred in Brahmacharya. The state of their mind remains the same, though they become impotent by taking nux vomica.

What is wanted is a judicious control of the Indriyas. The Indriyas should not be allowed to run riot in sensual grooves. They should not be allowed to throw us ruthlessly into the deep pit of worldliness, like the turbulent horse carrying away the rider wherever it likes.

Brahmacharya means control, but not suppression, of the sex desire or sex force. The mind should be rendered pure by meditation, Japa, Kirtan and prayer. If the mind is filled with sublime divine thoughts by meditation, Japa, prayer and study of holy scriptures, the sex desire will be devitalised or de-energised by the withdrawal of the mind. The mind also will be thinned out.

From sex energy to spiritual energy

The sexual energy must be transmuted into spiritual energy or Ojas Sakti by the practice of Japa, prayer, meditation, study of religious books, Pranayama and Asanas. You must develop devotion and a burning desire for liberation. You must constantly meditate on the pure, immortal, sexless, bodiless, desireless Atman. Then only the sexual desire will be annihilated.

If the sexual energy is transmuted into Ojas or spiritual energy by pure thoughts, it is called sex sublimation in western psychology. Sublimation is not a matter of suppression or repression, but a positive, dynamic, conversion process. It is the process of controlling the sex

energy, conserving it, then diverting it into higher channels, and finally, converting it into spiritual energy or Ojas Sakti. The material energy is changed into spiritual energy, just as heat is changed into light and electricity. Just as a chemical substance is sublimated or purified by raising the substance through heat into vapour which again is condensed into solid form, so also, the sexual energy is purified and changed into divine energy by spiritual Sadhana.

Ojas is spiritual energy that is stored up in the brain. By entertaining sublime, soul-elevating thoughts of the Self or Atman, by meditation, Japa, worship and Pranayama, the sexual energy can be transmuted into Ojas Sakti and stored up in the brain. This stored up energy can then be utilised for divine contemplation and spiritual pursuits.

Anger and muscular energy can also be transmuted into Ojas. A man who has a great deal of Ojas in his brain can turn out immense mental work. He is very intelligent. He has lustrous eyes and a magnetic aura in his face. He can influence people by speaking a few words. A short speech of his produces a tremendous impression on the minds of the hearers. His speech is thrilling. He has an awe-inspiring personality. Sri Sankara, an Akhanda Brahmachari, worked wonders through his power of Ojas. He did Digvijaya and held controversies and heated debates in different parts of India with learned scholars through his power of Ojas. A Yogi always directs his attention to the accumulation of this divine energy by unbroken chastity.

In Yoga, it is called Oordhvaretas. An Oordhvareta Yogi is one in whom the seminal energy has flown upwards into the brain as Ojas Sakti. There is now no possibility of the semen going downwards by sexual excitement.

The secret of sex sublimation

According to Yogic science, semen exists in a subtle form throughout the whole body. It is found in a subtle state in all the cells of the body. It is withdrawn and elaborated into a gross form in the sexual organ under the influence of the sexual will and sexual excitement. An Oordhvareta Yogi not only converts the semen into Ojas, but checks through his Yogic power, through purity in thought, word and deed, the very formation of semen by the secretary cells of the testes or seeds. This is a great secret. Allopaths believe that even in an Oordhvareta Yogi, the formation of semen goes on incessantly and that the fluid is reabsorbed into the blood. This is a mistake. They do not understand the inner Yogic secrets and mysteries. They are in the dark. Their Drishti or vision is concerned with the gross things of the universe. The Yogi penetrates into the subtle hidden nature of things through Yogic Chakshu or the inner vision of wisdom. The Yogi gets control over the astral nature of semen and thereby prevents the formation of the very fluid itself.

The body of a man who is truly an Oordhvaretas has the scent of a lotus. A man who is not a Brahmachari, in whom gross semen is formed, may, on the other hand, smell like a buck goat. The semen dries up in those who practice Pranayama seriously. The semen-energy ascends up to the brain. It is stored up as Ojas Sakti or spiritual energy and comes back as Amrita or nectar.

The process of sex sublimation is extremely difficult. It demands constant and protracted Sadhana and perfect discipline. That Yogi who has achieved perfect sublimation has perfect control over lust. Complete sublimation is achieved through ceaseless meditation on Atman and Self-realization. That Yogi or Jnani who has attained the highest Nirvikalpa Samadhi, in whom the seeds of Samskaras are fried in toto, can claim to be a perfect Oordhvaretas or one who has complete sex sublimation. There is no fear of his downfall. He is perfectly safe. He will be absolutely free from impurity. This stage is a very high stage. A microscopic minority only have attained this sublime exalted state. Sankara, Dattatreya, Jnana Deva of Alandi and others reached this stage.

There is another sect called "Dhiryaretas", or those persons, who, previously a prey to lustful thoughts and deviated from Brahmacharya, later take to the practice of strict celibacy. Such a person, if he practices strict celibacy for twelve years, can acquire superhuman powers. Medha Nadi or Buddhi Nadi is formed in him. By means of this, he can have retentive memory of anything as long as he lives, and he will be in a position to learn all kinds of subjects.

By observance of unbroken Brahmacharya in thought, word and deed for a period of full twelve years, one is bestowed even with the vision of God, if one aspires for it. He can solve the most abstruse and complicated problems easily. But, this kind of observance should commence before the thirty-second or the thirty-fourth year.

That Yogi who has disciplined himself through ceaseless protracted Sadhana, continuous meditation, Pranayama and Atmic Vichara, the practice of Sama, Dama, Yama and Niyama, is also safe, although he has not attained the stage of perfect sex sublimation. Women will hold no attraction for him. He has thinned out his mind. The mind is starved to death. It cannot raise its hood. It cannot hiss.

Total sublimation is difficult, yet not impossible

The process of sex sublimation is very difficult, and yet, it is most necessary for the aspirant in the spiritual path. It is the most important qualification for the Sadhaka, be he in the path of Karma Yoga, Upasana, Raja Yoga or Vedanta. It is a fundamental prerequisite for an aspirant. If one has this qualification or merit, all other merits will come and cling to him. All good qualities will come by themselves. You must achieve this at any cost. You will surely attempt this in future births. But why not now?

The total annihilation of the sexual desire is the ultimate spiritual ideal. Complete sublimation alone will make you free. But, perfect sublimation can hardly be achieved within a day or two. It demands continuous struggle with patience and perseverance for some time. Even the householders should keep the above ideal before them and try to realize it gradually. If the state of perfect sublimation is attained, there will be purity in thought, word and deed. No sexual thought will enter the mind at any time.

It is through constant Vichara and Brahma-Bhavana that the mind has to be weaned from lustful thoughts and tendencies. You must remove not only the sexual craving and the sexual

impulses, but also the sex attraction. Think of the miseries that you get from a married life with its various entanglements and bondage. Make the mind understand by repeated autosuggestion and hammering that sexual pleasure is false, worthless, illusory and full of pain. Place before the mind the advantages, bliss, power and knowledge of a spiritual life. Make it understand that the exalted, eternal life is in the immortal Atman. When it hears constantly these suggestions, it will slowly leave off its old habits. The attraction for sex will slowly die. Then only real sex sublimation will take place. Then only you will become an Oordhvareta Yogi.

There are two kinds of force in the mind, namely, hostile or antagonistic force and friendly or favourable force. Passion is a hostile force that drags you down. Pure reason is a favourable force that elevates you and transmutes you into Divinity. Develop, therefore, my child, pure reason to get unalloyed bliss and supreme Brahmic knowledge. Passion will die by itself.

Sex sublimation is within your reach if you wish to attain it. The path is quite clear, straight and easy if you understand it and if you apply yourself with patience, perseverance, determination and strong will, if you practice discipline of the Indriyas, right conduct, right thinking, right acting, regular meditation, assertion, auto-suggestion and enquiry of "Who am I?". Atman is sexless. Atman is Nirvikara. Feel this. Can there be any trace of lust or impurity in the etemal, pure Atman?

Glory to those Yogis who have attained Oordhvaretas or full sex sublimation and who are resting in their own Svarupa! May we all practice perfect celibacy through the practice of Sama, Dama, Viveka, Vichara, Vairagya, Pranayama, Japa and Dhyana and reach the goal of life! May the Indweller of our hearts grant us spiritual strength to control the Indriyas and the mind! May we all become full Oordhvareta Yogis like Sankara and Jnana Dev of yore! May their blessings be upon us all!

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15. TO MARRY OR NOT TO MARRY

Is celibacy possible?

It is quite possible for a man to practice celibacy while remaining in the world, albeit there are various sorts of temptations and distractions. Many have achieved this in times of yore. There are many even at the present moment also. A well disciplined life, a Sattvic and moderate diet, study of religious scriptures, Satsanga, Japa, Dhyana, Pranayama, daily introspection and enquiry, self-analysis and self-correction, Sadachara, practice of Yama and Niyama, physical, verbal and mental Tapas in accordance with the teachings of the Seventeenth Chapter of the Gita—all will pave a long way in the attainment of this end. People have an irregular, unrighteous, immoderate, irreligious, undisciplined life. Hence they suffer, and fail in the achievement of the goal of life. Just as the elephant throws sand on its own head, so also, they themselves bring difficulties and troubles on their own heads on account of their foolishness.

Those who practice Brahmacharya generally complain that they get mental fatigue owing to continence. This is only a deception of the mind. You get sometimes a pseudo-hunger, whereas, when you actually sit for dinner, you have no real good appetite and you do not take any food. So also, there is a false mental fatigue. If you observe Brahmacharya, you will have immense mental strength. You will not be able to feel it always. You will manifest it when the occasion arises, in the same way as a wrestler manifests his physical strength in the arena, though he feels as normal man in ordinary times.

Continence is not harmful. It conserves energy. It gives immense strength and peace. Sexual indulgence leads to moral and spiritual bankruptcy, premature death, and loss of faculties, talents and capacities.

The practice of celibacy is not attended with any danger or any dire disease or undesirable result such as the various sorts of complex which are wrongly attributed to it by the Western psychologists. They have no practical knowledge of the subject on hand. They have got a wrong, ill-founded imagination that the ungratified sex energy assumes in disguise the various forms of complex such as the touch phobia. The complex is due to some other causes. It is a morbid state of mind due to excessive jealousy, hatred, anger, worry and depression brought about by various causes.

On the contrary, even a little self-restraint or a little practice of continence is an ideal pick-me-up. It gives inner strength and peace of mind. It invigorates the mind and nerves. It helps to conserve physical and mental energy. It augments memory, will-force and brain-power. It bestows tremendous strength, vigour and vitality. It renovates the system or constitution, rebuilds the cells and tissues, energises digestion and gives power to face the difficulties in the daily battle of life. The special virtues of endurance and bravery are intimately connected with the cultivation of chastity. A perfect celibate can move the world, can stop the ocean-waves like Lord Jesus, can blow up mountains, can command nature and the five elements like Jnana Dev. There is nothing in the three worlds that cannot be achieved by him. All Siddhis and Riddhis roll under his feet.

A foolish argument of the Epicureans

Some ignorant people say: “It is not right to check passion. We must not go against nature. Why has God created young beautiful women? There must be some sense, in His creation. We should enjoy them and procreate as many as possible. We should keep up the progeny of the line. If all people become Sannyasins and go to forests, what will become of this world? It will come to an end. If we check passion, we will get disease. We must get plenty of children. There is happiness in the house when we have abundant children. The happiness of married life cannot be described in words. It is the be-all and end-all of life. I do not like Vairagya, Tyaga, Sannyasa and Nivritti.” This is their crude philosophy. They are the direct descendants of Charvaka and Virochana. They are life-members of the Epicurean school of thought. Gluttonism is their goal of life. They have a very large following. They are friends of Satan. Admirable is their philosophy!

When they lose their property, wife and children, when they suffer from, an incurable disease, they will say, "O God, free me from this horrible disease. Forgive me my sins. I am a great sinner."

Passion should be checked at all costs. Not a single disease comes by checking passion. On the contrary, you will get immense power, joy and peace. There are also effective methods to control passion. One should reach Atman, which is beyond nature, by going against nature. Just as a fish swims upstream against the current in a river, so also, you will have to move against the worldly currents of evil forces. Then alone can you have Self-realization. Passion is an evil force; and it should be checked if you want to enjoy undecaying Atmic bliss. Sexual pleasure is no pleasure at all. It is a mental delusion. It is attended with dangers, pain, fear, exertion and disgust. If you know Yoga or the science of Atman, you can very easily control the dire malady, which is passion. God wants you to enjoy the bliss of Atman, which can be had by renouncing all these pleasures of this world. These beautiful women and wealth are the instruments of Maya to delude you and entrap you into her nets. If you wish to remain always as a worldly man with low thoughts, debasing desires, you can by all means do so. You are at perfect liberty. You can marry three hundred and fifty wives and procreate as many children. Nobody can check you. But you will soon find that this world cannot give you the satisfaction you want, because all objects are conditioned in time, space and causation. There are death, disease, old age, cares, worries and anxieties, fear, loss, disappointment failure, abuse, heat, cold, snake-bites, scorpion-stings, earthquakes and accidents. You cannot at all find rest of mind even for a single second. As your mind is filled with passion and impurity, your understanding is clouded and your intellect is perverted now. You are not able to understand the illusory nature of the universe and the ever-lasting bliss of Atman.

Passion can be effectively checked. There are potent methods. After checking passion, you will enjoy real bliss from within—from Atman. All men cannot become Sannyasins. They have various ties and attachments. They are passionate and cannot, therefore, leave the world. They are pinned to their wives, children and property. Your proposition is wholly wrong. It is Asambhava. It is impossible. Have you ever heard in the annals of the world's history that this world became vacant as all men became Sannyasins? Then, why do you bring in this absurd proposition? This is an ingenious trick of your mind to support your foolish arguments and satanic philosophy, which has passion and sexual gratification as its important tenets. Do not talk like this in future. This exposes your foolishness and passionate nature. Do not bother yourself about this world. Mind your own business. God is all-powerful. Even if this world is completely evacuated when all people retire to the forests, God will immediately create crores of people by mere willing, within the twinkling of an eye. This is not your look-out. Find out methods to eradicate your passion.

Marriage cannot be taken as an indispensable factor in everyone's life. Rather, a true aspirant should definitely keep himself far, far away from the fetters of a married life. For him, marriage constitutes a curse; while at the same time, for a man of a lustful disposition for whom it is extremely difficult to get over carnal passions, it is a sort of a fence and a protecting vault to his moral recklessness. Marriage is, therefore, prescribed for those—and it applies to the

majority of mankind—who are not yet ready for a life of absolute self-restraint and thus is to be regarded by them as a sacrament, and certainly not as a licence to self-indulgence.

Every one born in this world need not necessarily marry. Marriage is meant to regulate one's life in the world. But for the institution of marriage in society, life would become irregular and beastly. But, where there is no passion in the heart, where the desire for God is strong, where there is a longing for spiritual pursuits, marriage is not compulsory. Such a man can lead a Naishthik Brahmachari's life.

Parents should not force marriage on their sons. They should not stamp out the spiritual Samskaras of their children. Many young men in whom there is a spiritual awakening write to me in pitiable words: "Dear Swamiji, my heart throbs for higher spiritual things. I have no interest in worldly matters. The surroundings are not favourable. I am entangled in the meshes of marriage. My parents forced me, much against my will, to marry. I had to please my old parents. They threatened me in various ways. I now weep. What shall I do now?" Young boys, who have no idea of this world and this life, are married when they are eight or ten years of age. We see children begetting children. There are child-mothers. A boy of about eighteen has three children. What a horrible state of affairs! Early marriages have wrought early loss of semen. There is physical and mental degeneration. There is no longevity. All are short-lived. Frequent child-bearing destroys the health of women and brings in a host of other ailments.

You have adopted various habits from the West in matters relating to dress and fashion. You have become a creature of vile imitation. They, in the West, do not marry unless they are able to maintain a family decently. They have got more self-restraint. They first secure a decent station in life, earn money, save something and then only think of marriage. If they have not got sufficient money, they remain bachelors throughout their lives. They do not want to bring forth beggars into this world just in the same manner as you do. He who has understood the magnitude of human suffering in this world will never dare to bring forth a single child from the womb of a woman.

Nature of the love between husband and wife

The love between husband and wife is mainly physical, selfish and hypocritical. It is not constant. It is of an ephemeral and changing nature. It is carnal passion only. It is sexual appetite. It is tinged with lower emotions. It is of bestial nature. It is finite. But divine love is infinite, pure, all-pervading and everlasting. There is no question of divorce here.

In reality, there is no internal union between husband and wife in the vast majority of cases. Savitri and Satyavan, Atri and Anasuya are very, very rare in these days. As husbands and wives are externally united only for selfish ends, there is only some show of smile and external love. It is all mere show only.

As there is no real union in their heart of hearts, there is always some kind of friction and rupture, wry faces and hot words, in every house. If the husband does not take his wife to the cinema, there will be fighting in the house. Can you call this real love? It is mercenary,

commercial business. On account of lust, men have lost their integrity, independence and dignity. They have become the slaves of women. What a pitiable spectacle you see! The key is with the wife, and even for two rupees, the husband has to stretch his hands to her. Still he says, under delusion and intoxication of passion, "I have a sweet, loving wife. She is really a Mira! She can be really worshipped!"

In mercenary love, there cannot be any real happiness between the two, the lover and the beloved. If the husband is in a dying condition, the wife takes the bank passbook and walks to her mother's house quietly. If the husband loses his job for some time, the wife shows wry faces, speaks harsh words and does not serve him properly with any love. This is selfish love. There is no real affection from the core of the heart. So there is always quarrel, fighting and Asanti in the house. Husbands and wives are not really united. They pull on anyhow, dragging a dreary, cheerless existence.

Passion is not love at all. It is an animal instinct. It is carnal love. It is of a beastly nature. It is shifting. If the wife loses her beauty on account of some incurable malady, she gets divorced and the husband marries a second wife. This state of affairs is going on in the world.

A husband loves his wife not for the sake of his wife, but for the sake of his own self. He is selfish. He expects sensual pleasure from her. If leprosy or smallpox destroys her beauty, his love for her ceases. When the wife dies, the husband is drowned in sorrow, not because of the loss of his loving partner in life, but because he cannot get sexual pleasure now.

When your wife is young and beautiful, you admire her curly hair, rosy cheeks, fine nose, shining skin and silvery teeth. When she loses her beauty on account of some chronic incurable malady, she no longer holds any attraction for you. You marry a second wife. Had you loved your first wife with Atma-Bhav, had you a comprehensive understanding that the Self in you and in your wife was the same, your love for her would have been pure, unselfish, lasting, undecaying and unchanging. Just as you love old sugar-candy or old rice the more, so also, you would love your wife more and more, even when she becomes old, as you have Atma-Bhav through Jnana. Jnana only will intensify Prem and make it lasting.

Physical love is animalism. Love of the body or skin is passion. It is passion exalted and refined. It is gross and sensual. Passion for the flesh or body is not pure or real love. It is only Moha or infatuation born of ignorance. You do wicked deeds and kill your soul on account of this passion.

Even our sisters of ill fame show for some time abundant love, sweet smile and honeyed words towards their customers. This they do as long as they can extract money. Can you call this love and real happiness? Just tell me frankly. There is cunningness, diplomacy, crookedness and hypocrisy here. There is no element of sacrifice in this love.

To be a celibate? Or to be a householder?

It is only for passionate people that the Grihastha Ashram or householder's life is prescribed, because they cannot control their lust. If one is born with sufficient spiritual Samskaras, inborn Viveka and Vairagya, like Sankara or Sadasiva Brahman, he will not enter the Grihashtha Ashram. He will at once take to Naishthik Brahmacharya and then embrace Sannyasa. The Srutis also endorse this. Says the Jabala Upanishad: "Renounce the world on the very day you get Vairagya".

To some, marriage hinders the spiritual progress; to others, it helps. For Raja Bhartrihari, it was a hindrance; for saint Tukaram, it was a help. Man reaches the same goal in the long run. Let the run be the shortest. Let the short cut be preferred to the long walk. That is what man always wants.

A life of celibacy is a hundred times better than the life of a Grihasthi. I believe in celibacy, for it is the thing that unfolds the hidden power in man. Brahmacharya is the straight road to God-realization; marriage is a serpentine route. The former is more preferable than the latter, but man takes to the latter route on account of his lower passions.

The realization of the Self, however, is not denied even to a Grihasthi just because he has the burden of a family on his shoulders. Saint Tukaram was married twice and had children; yet, he reached Vaikuntha in a Vimana or an aerial car. If your outlook on worldly life is simple, true and honest, if your would-be partner is one who is pious and one who will obey you in all matters, there is no harm in marrying. But if the married life is more likely to prove burden, a curse on one, why should one marry and entangle oneself in chains that can never be cut asunder?

If you want to observe strict celibacy, do not marry. Do not allow yourself to be duped by saying, "I will observe strict celibacy after marriage." Afterwards it will offer you its own arguments for giving up this vow of celibacy. Your Dharma is to realize God.

You had enough of sense and sex gratification in all your previous bodies of various animals. Animal life is meant for satisfaction of the lower appetites of sex and tongue, but human life is meant for a higher purpose. Why do you, oh man, burn the sandalwood tree for serving the purpose of charcoal? This human life is very precious, envied even by the gods. One life lost means one golden opportunity to become God is lost.

Sensual pleasure is tantalizing. As long as a person does not possess the object of desire, so long there is enchantment. After obtaining possession of the object, he finds that he is entangled in it. The bachelor thinks of his marriage day in and day out, but enjoyment does not, and cannot, bring satisfaction to him. Far from it, it only aggravates and intensifies the desire and makes the mind more restless through passion and craving. He realizes that he is in imprisonment. This is Mayaic jugglery. This world is full of temptations.

You cannot get bliss in the objects of the world. It is only materialistic poison. Further, marriage is a lifelong imprisonment. It is the greatest bondage of the earth. The bachelor who was once free is the yoke and his hands and feet are chained. This is the experience of all married people, invariably as it were. Therefore, do not marry if you can help it. Escape will be difficult after marriage. Realize the glory of a life in the spiritual path and the great difficulties, anxieties, worries and troubles of a married life. Develop intense Vairagya. Assert your birthright of God-consciousness. Art thou not Brahman itself in truth?

A wife is a sharp knife to cut the life of the husband. If the gold necklace and Benares silk sarees are not supplied, the wife frowns at the husband. The husband cannot get his food at the proper time. The wife lies down in bed under the false pretext of acute abdominal colic. You can see this spectacle in your own house and daily experience. Indeed I need not tell you much. Therefore, be wedded to Santi and have Vairagya, the worthy son, and Viveka, the magnanimous daughter and eat the delicious divine fruit of Atma-Jnana, which can make you immortal.

A wife is only a luxury. It is not an absolute necessity. Every householder is weeping after marriage. He says: “My son is ailing from typhoid. My second daughter is to be married. I have debts to clear. My wife is worrying me to purchase a gold necklace. My eldest son-in-law died recently”.

Do not marry. Do not marry. Do not marry. Escape will be difficult after marriage. Marriage is the greatest bondage. Woman is a source of constant vexation and trouble. What did Buddha, Pattinattu Swami, Bhartrihari and Gopichand do? Did they not live in peace and comfort without a woman?

Lust is the greatest enemy on earth. It devours a man. A great deal of depression follows the sexual act. You have to exert a lot in earning money to please your wife and satisfy her wants and luxuries. You commit various sorts of sins in acquiring money. You mentally share her pains and sorrows and the pains and miseries of your children as well. You have to worry in a thousand and one ways in running the family. As two minds cannot agree, there will always be quarrels in the house. You have to unnecessarily multiply your wants and responsibilities. Your intellect gets spoiled. On account of heavy loss of the seminal fluid, you will suffer from diseases, depression, weakness and loss of vitality. Consequently, you will have an early death. Therefore, become an Akhanda Brahmachari or a lifelong celibate. Free yourself from all miseries, worries and troubles.

In the presence of light, you cannot have darkness. In the presence of sensual pleasures, Atmic bliss cannot exist. Worldlings want sensual pleasures and Atmic bliss at the same time, in one and the same cup. This is an absolute impossibility. They cannot renounce worldly, sensual pleasures. They cannot have real Vairagya in their heart of hearts. They will talk a lot. Worldly men imagine that they are happy because they get a few ginger biscuits, some money and woman. What more is wanted for them, poor creatures? More beggars are brought forth into the world through lust. All worldly pleasures appear as nectar in the beginning, but become virulent poison in the end. When one gets entangled in married life, he can hardly break the different ties of

Moha. Therefore, give up clinging to this illusory life. Be fearless. Control the Indriyas and the mind. You will develop Vairagya. You will be perfectly established in Brahmacharya.

The Akhanda Brahmachari

If you can remain as an Akhanda Brahmachari, an unbroken celibate, for a period of twelve years, you will realize God immediately without any further Sadhana. You will have achieved the goal of life. Mark the word 'Akhanda'.

Seminal energy is a potent Sakti. Semen is Brahman Itself. A Brahmachari who has practiced unbroken celibacy for full twelve years will attain to the Nirvikalpa state the moment he hears the Mahavakya, "*Tat Tvam Asi*", because his mind will be extremely pure, strong and one-pointed.

An Akhanda Brahmachari, who, for a period of twelve years, has not allowed even a drop of semen to come out, will enter into Samadhi without any effort. Prana and mind are under his perfect control. Bala Brahmacharya is a synonymous term for Akhanda Brahmacharya. An Akhanda Brahmachari has strong Dharana Sakti, Smriti Sakti and Vichara Sakti—power of grasping, retentive memory and power of enquiry. He need not practice Manana and Nididhyasana, reflection and meditation. If he hears the Mahavakya even once, he will at once achieve Self-realization. His intellect is pure, and his understanding is extremely clear. Akhanda Brahmacharins are very, very rare; but there are some. You also can become an Akhanda Brahmachari if you attempt in right earnest.

You will have to be very careful of reaction. The Indriyas that are put under restraint for some months, or one or two years, become rebellious if you are not always vigilant and careful. They revolt and drag you out when opportunities arise. Some people who observe Brahmacharya for one or two years become more passionate and waste the energy considerably in the end. Some become incorrigible moral wrecks also.

Mere matted hair and application of ashes to the forehead and the body cannot make one an Akhanda Brahmachari. That Brahmachari who has controlled the physical body and the physical Indriyas, but who constantly dwells on sexual thoughts, is a confirmed hypocrite. He should never be trusted. He may become a menace at any time.

16. THE DANGERS OF PROMISCUOUS MIXING

Do not be too familiar with anybody. Familiarity breeds contempt. Do not multiply friends. Do not court friendship with women. Do not also be very familiar with them. Familiarity with women will eventually end in your destruction. Never, never forget this point. Friends are your real foes.

Do not mix with members of the opposite sex. Maya works through undercurrents so stealthily that you may not be aware of your actual downfall. The sexual Vasana will assume an

aggravated form suddenly without a moment's notice. You will commit adultery and then repent. Then your character and fame will vanish. Dishonour is more than death. There is no crime more heinous than this. There is no Prayaschitta for this. So beware. Be cautious.

Bhagavan Dattatreya has compared woman to a burning pit of fire and man to a pot of ghee. When the latter comes in contact with the former, it perishes. Therefore, abandon her.

If you happen to live in a Dharmashala or public inn, if there is a single woman in your neighbouring room, leave the place at once. You do not know what will happen. It is always advisable to leave the danger zone immediately, however strong you may be through the practice of Tapas and meditation. Do not expose yourself to temptation.

Do not test your spiritual strength and purity when you are a beginner on the spiritual path. Do not rush into evil associations when you are a spiritual neophyte to show that you have the courage to face sin and impurity. It will be a serious mistake. You will be running into a grave danger. You will have a quick downfall. A small fire will be very easily extinguished by a heap of dust.

You should remain far away from women in the beginning of your practices. After you are perfectly moulded and well established in Brahmacharya, you can test your strength by moving with ladies very cautiously for some time. If your mind is very pure then also, if there is no sex idea, if the mind ceases to act through the practice of Uparati, Sama and Dama, remember that you have gained real spiritual strength and made considerable progress in your Sadhana. You are safe now. You should not stop your Sadhana thinking that you are a Jitendriya Yogi. If you stop it, you will have a hopeless fall.

Even advanced aspirants who have made great progress in Yoga should be very careful. They should not freely mix with women. They should not foolishly imagine that they have become great adepts in Yoga. A great saint of repute had a downfall. He freely mixed with women and made women-disciples, whom he allowed to massage his legs. As the sex energy was not completely sublimated and turned into Ojas, as lust was lurking in a subtle form in his mind, he became a victim to passion. He lost his reputation. The sexual desire was only suppressed in him, and when a suitable opportunity came, it again assumed a grave form. He had no strength or will power to resist the temptation.

Another great soul, who was regarded by his disciples as an Avatar, became a Yoga-Bhrashta. He also freely mixed with ladies and committed a serious lapse. He became a prey to lust. What a sad misfortune! Aspirants climb with great difficulty by the ladder of Yoga and they are irrecoverably lost for ever on account of their carelessness and spiritual pride.

Havoc played by mental images

The presence of, or recollection of, a woman usually excites unholy ideas in the minds of recluses who have abandoned this world and devoted themselves to spiritual exercises and thus deprives them of the fruit of their austerity. It is very difficult to understand the presence of

subtle lust in the minds of others, particularly in spiritual recluses, though the look, tone, gestures, gait and behaviour may give a clue.

Note carefully how Raja Bhartrihari had cried during his Sadhana stage: “O my Lord! I left my wife, my territory. I live on leaves, fruits and roots. The earth is my sofa. The blue sky is my canopy. The quarters are my clothes. Yet, my passion has not left me.” Such is the power of passion.

Jerome writes to the virgin Eustochium about his struggle for abstinence and the power of lust: “Oh, how many times when in the desert, in that vast solitude which, burnt by the heat of the sun, offers but a horrible dwelling to monks, I imagined I was among the delights of Rome! I was alone. My limbs were covered by a wretched sack and my skin was as black as the Ethiopian’s. Every day I wept and groaned, and if I was unwillingly overcome by sleep, my lean body lay on the bare earth. I say nothing of my food and drink, for in the desert, even invalids have no drink but cold water. Well, I who out of fear of hell had condemned myself to this prison, companion of scorpions and wild beasts, often seemed in imagination among a band of girls. My face was pale with fasting and my mind within my frigid body was burning with desire; the fire of lust would still flame up in a body that already seemed to be dead.” Such is the power of lust.

The mind is the seed of the world. It is the mind that creates this world. There is no world quite apart from the mind. The images of all objects are contained in the mind. The mind plays with these images when it cannot get the objects and does great havoc. If you constantly think of the image of the Lord, the images of objects will die by themselves.

The forbidden fruit—God’s test for the spiritual aspirant

God places some temptations before the aspirant to test his spiritual strength. He gives him also strength to conquer the temptations. The strongest temptation in this world is lust. All the saints passed through temptations. Temptations are profitable. People are instructed and strengthened.

Even Buddha was tested for his mental purity. He had to face temptations of every sort. He had to face Mara. It was only then, and not till then, that he had illumination under the Bodhi tree in Gaya. Satan tempted Jesus in a variety of ways. Passion is very powerful. Many aspirants fail in the tests. One has to be very careful. The aspirant will have to develop a very high standard of mental purity. Then alone he will be able to stand the test. God will place the aspirants in very unfavourable surroundings to test them. They will be tempted by young girls. Name and fame bring the householders in close contact with the aspirants. Women begin to worship them. They become their disciples. Gradually the aspirants get a nasty downfall. Instances are many. Aspirants should hide themselves and pass for quite ordinary people. They should not show their Chamatkaras.

Although Rishi Visvamitra was practising severe austerities, he was carried away by his turbulent senses when he came across the celestial nymph sent by Indra to disturb his Tapas. If

Visvamitra and Parasara who were living on leaves, air and water were victims of lust, what should be the fate of worldly people who are living on rich food? If they can control their passion, the Vindhya mountain will float on the ocean, fire will burn downwards.

The sex instinct is most powerful. The sex urge is formidable. It may conceal itself in underground compartments in the mind and assail you when you are not vigilant. It will attack you with redoubled force. Visvamitra fell a victim of Menaka. Another great Rishi became a prey to Rambha. Jaimini got excited by false woman Masa. A powerful Rishi was excited by the sight of the mating of a fish. A householder aspirant carried away even his Guru's wife. Many aspirants are not aware of this secret urge, a treacherous enemy. They think that they are quite safe and pure. When they are put to test, they become hopeless victims. Always remain alone, meditate and slay this urge.

Money and woman shine more brightly than God for an ignorant, passionate man. Maya is powerful. Adam fell on account of one loose moment. Eve tempted on account of one desire. The forbidden fruit will ripen before the human eyes in no time. A post will look like the illustrious Deva and make you bow in utter submission before it. Beware of Maya and its meshes. The chains of gold can be cut asunder, but not the silken meshes of Maya. A single unguarded moment is sufficient to capsize the whole casket of pearls, down into the dark abyss of passion and lust.

The moss that is momentarily displaced in a tank resumes its original position in the twinkling of an eye. Similarly, Maya envelops even the wise, if they are careless even for a minute. Therefore, sleepless vigilance is necessary in the spiritual path. The proverb goes: "There is many a slip between the cup and the lip." Before you begin to eat the fruit of wisdom, the monkey Maya will snatch it away from your hand. Even if you swallow it, it may get stuck to your throat. Therefore you will have to be ever vigilant and careful till you attain Bhuma or the highest realization. You should not stop your Sadhana falsely thinking that you have reached the goal.

He who lives in seclusion is more exposed to temptations and danger. He will have to be very careful and vigilant. The mind will be tempted to do anything as there is nobody to witness its evil action. All suppressed evil Vrittis will be waiting for an opportunity to attack him with redoubled force. He is just like a man who is put in a big bag with a tiger, a serpent and a bear. The enemies anger, lust and greed will take you unawares. When you walk alone in the spiritual path, they will attack you like the thieves who attack a lonely passenger in the dense forest. Therefore, be always in the company of the wise. Do not go astray.

17. STOP THAT LUSTFUL LOOK!

A gentleman who has given up smoking and drinking wants to practice Brahmacharya, though married. His wife has no objection, but he himself finds this discipline hard; especially, the trouble seems to be in the control of the sense of sight. "The street is my chief enemy", he said to me recently. This means that the eyes are attracted by well-dressed ladies.

Another aspirant says, "While I practiced vigorously Pranayama, Japa and meditation, my mind was not polluted even if I saw half-nude young ladies. But when I left the practice, I was not able, to control my sight and I was attracted by well-dressed ladies in the streets and half-nude pictures pasted in front of picture-houses. The sea-beach and Mall Road are my enemies."

Those who practice Brahmacharya should control the sexual gazing impulse. This kind of impulse is a great menace, as it stimulates curiosity and sexual desire. Vasanas grow from lustful look.

Looking at a woman will create a desire to talk to her. Talking to a woman will create a desire to touch her. Eventually you will have an impure mind and will fall a victim. Therefore, never look at a woman. Never talk to a woman in privacy. Do not be familiar with any woman.

Mind the feeling behind the look!

There is no harm in looking at a beautiful object; but you will have to develop the Divine Bhav. You will have to feel that everything is a manifestation of God. Purify your thoughts and feelings. Purity is Brahman. Thou art pure in essence. Thou art an embodiment of purity, O Ram. Repeat mentally the formula, "Suddhoham, Suddhoham. I am purity, I am purity", and attain that state of pristine, matchless purity.

You have no lustful look when you see your mother or sister although they are beautiful, well-dressed and decorated with ornaments and flowers. You look at them with affection and pure love. This is Suddha Bhavana. There are no lustful ideas. You will have to develop such a pure love or Bhavana when you look at other women also. If there is impurity behind the gaze, it tantamounts to adultery. Looking at a woman with a lustful heart is tantamount to sexual enjoyment. It is one form of Maithunam. That is the reason why Lord Jesus says, "If you have a lustful look at a woman, you have already committed adultery in your heart."

There is no harm in looking at a woman, but you must have a perfectly chaste look. You must have Atma-Bhav. When you look at a young lady, you can think within yourself: "Prostrations unto Thee, O Mother. Thou art an image or manifestation of Mother Kali. Do not tempt. Do not allure me. I have understood now the secret of Maya and her creation. Who has created these forms? There is an omnipotent, all-pervading and all-merciful Creator behind these names and forms. This is all decaying, false beauty. The Creator or God is Beauty of beauties. He is an embodiment of undecaying beauty. He is the fountain-head of beauty. Let me realize this Beauty of beauties through meditation." You will have to cultivate feelings of devotion, admiration and awe when you look at an alluring form by remembering the Creator of that form.

Then you will not be tempted. If you are a student of Vedanta, think and feel: “Everything is Self only. The names and forms are illusory. They are Mayaic pictures. They have no independent existence apart from the Self.”

If one should not look at a woman, how did the Rishis of yore impart Atma-Jnana to ladies? Why did they keep them in their constant company for service?

The dictum, “Do not look even at the picture of a woman”, is for passionate people who have no self-control. Yajnavalkya taught Atma-Vidya to his wife Maitreyi. Raikva had the daughter of King Janasruti to serve him. He was a Naishthik Brahmachari.

Even in a Jivanmukta or a liberated sage, the eyes will move towards the objects through the force of habit. But, he can withdraw them completely and make them mere empty sockets if he wills. When he sees a woman, he does not see her outside himself. He sees the whole world within himself. He feels that the woman is his own Self. He has no sex idea. There are no evil thoughts in his mind. He feels no sexual attraction towards her. Whereas, a worldly man sees the woman outside himself. He entertains lustful thoughts. He has no idea of Self. He is attracted towards her. This is the difference between the vision of a Jnani and that of a worldly man. There is no harm in looking at women, but you must not entertain evil thoughts.

There is no harm in looking at a beautiful woman. You can admire the beauty of a girl just as you admire the beauty of a rose, the beauty of the sea, the stars or any other natural scenery. Think that the beauty of your wife belongs to Nature and Nature’s Lord, Isvar. Whenever you see a lady, put this question to your mind: “Who is the creator of this beautiful form?” At once, a sense of wonder, a sense of admiration and a sense of devotion will arise in your mind. It is only when you dart a lustful, unchaste look at a woman that you commit sin. You commit adultery at heart. Only when you entertain lustful thoughts, bondage and misery come.

The beauty that you perceive in the faces of the ladies is the beauty of the Lord. You can have admiration in this manner. There is no harm in so doing.

Woman is a symbol of beauty. She is a symbol of power. She talks to you in the language of silence: “I am a representative of Adi Sakti. See God in me. See Mother Kali in me. Realize God in and through me. Worship God as an embodiment of beauty. Adore Him as an embodiment of power. Recognise His omnipotence.” Again and again think that the beauty of the face is the beauty of the Lord. Godly feeling will arise in you when you look at a woman. Study the Tenth Chapter of the Gita, Vibhuti Yoga, again and again.

How to counter impure thoughts

Impure thoughts that arise at the sight of a woman will gradually vanish when you grow in purity through regular Japa and meditation. It takes some time to destroy the old vicious Samskaras and overhaul the mental factory. Again and again raise pure counter-thoughts in the mind. Bring up the image of the Lord. Again and again try to feel Atma in women by forgetting

the sex idea and create disgust in your mind by an analysis of the parts of which the body is composed.

Whenever the mind runs towards attractive women with lustful thoughts, have a definite clear-cut photo in the mind of the flesh, bone, urine, faecal matter and perspiration of which women are composed. This will induce disgust and Vairagya in the mind. You will never again commit the sin of unchaste look at a woman. It takes some time, no doubt. Ladies also can practice the foregoing method and keep a mental picture of men in just the same way.

You should develop not only disgust in your mind, but also fear in order to get rid of the sex idea. Are you not extremely frightened when a cobra comes in front of you? This must be the state of your mind when lustful thoughts enter your mind. Then only the sex attraction will gradually die.

Inflict self-punishment if the mind runs towards women with lustful ideas. Give up night meals. Do twenty Malas more of Japa. Always wear a Kaupin or Langoti.

Do not look at a woman with an evil eye. If she is old, treat her as your mother; if she is young, as your sister; and if very young, as your child. You may fail to develop the Bhav that all women are your mothers and sisters a hundred and one times. It does not matter. Stick to your practice tenaciously. You are bound to succeed eventually.

When you walk on the road, do not look hither and thither like a monkey. Look at the tip of your right big toe and walk gently with a Gambhir attitude. Or look at the ground and walk. This is a great help in maintaining Brahmacharya. You can look at the tip of the nose also.

O child of the Immortal Essence! Thou hast walked for a long time with lustful eyes. Apply the collyrium of discrimination and the pigment of Vichar. You will have a new magnanimous vision. The whole world will appear to you as a mass of crystallised bliss. You will find no evil, no ugliness.

There is no denying, however, that lust is a powerful force to overcome. Somebody asked Raja Yudhishthira, “O Yudhishthira, when you look at your mother Kunti, is your look absolutely chaste?” Yudhishthira replied, “I cannot say that my look is entirely pure.” Such is the force of lust.

You may say outwardly: “I regard her as my mother. I consider her as my sister.” Though you may not do anything outwardly on account of religious fear or Loka-Lajja, mentally you are not what you should be. The mind will run in wrong directions. It will be doing havoc silently. Various kinds of evil thoughts and desires will arise in your mind. Desire or thought is more than the act. When you are put to test silently, you will fail hopelessly. You will not be able to have physical control even.

There is nothing, however, that a Sadhaka cannot achieve if he sets his mind to it. The greater the difficulty, the greater the glory of success. Try, try, try again. Train yourself not to

look at a woman for some time. If you are unable to do this and find your looks straying up to a woman with lustful purpose, raise in your mind the image of a corpse or a skeleton or wrinkled, diseased old woman and keep it till you are filled with disgust. This will enable you to succeed finally in subduing passion. At the same time, take refuge in Devi's lotus-feet. Pray to Her constantly for strength to withstand and conquer the onslaughts of passion. Look upon every woman as Sri Devi Herself and do mental prostration to her at sight, repeating, "Om Sri Durga Devyai Namah." By vigilant and constant Sadhana like the above, you can gradually eradicate the powerful enemy.

18. THE ROLE OF DIET IN SEX CONTROL

Diet plays a prominent part in keeping up Brahmacharya. Purity of food brings in purity of mind. That power which connects the body and the mind is present in the food that we take. Various kinds of food have varying effects on the mind. There are certain kinds of food that make the mind and the body very strong and steady. So it is absolutely essential that we should take pure and Sattvic food. Food has a very close connection with Brahmacharya. If proper attention is given to the purity of the food that we take, Brahmacharya becomes quite easy.

The influence of foodstuffs on the brain cells, emotion and passion is remarkable. There are different compartments in the brain and each food produces its own effect on each compartment and on the general system. A confection of sparrow produces an aphrodisiac effect. It directly stimulates the reproductive organs. Garlic, onions, meat, fish and eggs stimulate passion. Mark how elephants and cows that live on grass are quiet and peaceful and how tigers and other carnivorous animals that live on meat are turbulent and ferocious. Instinct or the voice from within will guide you in the selection of articles of diet that are conducive to the keeping up of Brahmacharya. You can also consult some elderly and experienced persons.

Sattvic food

Cheru, Havis Annam, milk, wheat, barley, bread, ghee, butter, dried ginger, green gram, potatoes, dates, plantains, curd, almonds and fruits are all Sattvic articles of food. Cheru is a mixture of boiled white rice, ghee, white sugar and milk. Havis Annam is also a similar preparation. This is very useful for spiritual aspirants. Milk is a perfect food by itself, containing as it does, the different nutritive constituents in a well balanced proportion. This is an ideal food for Yogins and Brahmacharins. Fruits are great energy producers. Bananas, grapes, sweet oranges, apples, pomegranates and mangoes are wholesome and nutritious.

Dry fruits such as grapes, raisins, dates and figs, sweet fresh fruits such as bananas, mangoes, Sapotas, melons, limes, pineapples, apples, wood apples and sweet pomegranates, sugar and sugar-candy, honey, sago, arrowroot, milk, butter and ghee of cows, tender coconut water, coconut, almonds, pistachio nuts, Toor Dhal, Ragi, barley, maize, wheat, rice of red paddy whose bran is only partly removed and rice of good smell or sweet taste, and all preparations from any of these grains, and white pumpkin are Sattvic articles for keeping up Brahmacharya.

Forbidden food

Highly seasoned dishes, hot curries, Chutnies, chillies, meat, fish, eggs, tobacco, liquor, sour articles, oil of all kinds, garlic, onions, bitter things, sour curd, stale food, acids, astringents, pungent stuffs, roasted things, over-ripe and unripe fruits, heavy vegetables and salt are not at all beneficial. Onions and garlic are worse than meat.

Salt is the worst enemy. Too much salt excites passion. Even if you do not take salt separately, the system will derive the necessary quantity of salt from other foodstuffs. All foodstuffs contain salt. Giving up of salt helps you in controlling the tongue and thereby the mind and all the other Indriyas.

All kinds of peas and beans, both fresh and fried, black grain, Bengal gram, horse gram, sprouted grains, mustard, all sorts of chillies, asafoetida, lentils, brinjals, lady's finger, cucumbers, Malabar nightshades, both white and red, bamboo shoots, papaw fruit, drumsticks, all varieties of gourd such as white gourd, snake gourd and squash gourd, radish, leeks, mushrooms of all kinds, things fried in oil or ghee, pickles of all sorts, fried rice, sesame seeds, tea, coffee, cocoa, all kinds of vegetables, leaves, roots, fruits and foodstuffs that create wind or indigestion, grief, pain or costiveness or other sickness, pastry preparations, foods that are dry and burning, foods that are bitter, sour, saline, over-hot and pungent, tobacco and its preparations, foods and drinks containing liquor or narcotic drugs such as opium and bhang, food preparations which are stale or have become cold subsequent to their removal from the hearth or which have lost their natural taste, smell, colour or form, or which are remnants after being eaten away by other persons, animals, birds or insects, or which contain dust, hair, straw or other rubbish, and milk of buffalo, goat or sheep should be avoided as they are either Rajasic or Tamasic by nature. Lemon juice, rock salt, ginger and white pepper can be used in moderation.

Mitahara or moderation in diet

Mitahara is moderation in food. Take wholesome Sattvic food half-stomachful. Fill a quarter with pure water. Allow the remaining part free. This is Mitahara. Brahmacharins should always take Mitahara only. They should be very careful about their night diet. They should never overload the stomach at night. Overloading is the direct cause for nocturnal emissions.

A glutton can never dream of becoming a Brahmachari. Control of tongue is a *sine qua non* if you want to control lust, if you want to observe the vow of Brahmacharya. The tongue must be controlled first. Then it will be easy to control the passion. There is intimate connection between the tongue and the organ of generation. Tongue is an organ of knowledge. It is born of the Sattvic portion of the water-Tanmatra. The organ of generation is an organ of action. It is born of the Rajasic portion of the water-Tanmatra. They are sister organs as the source is the same. If the tongue is stimulated with Rajasic food, at once the reproductive organ also gets excited. There should be selection and restriction in diet. The food of a Brahmachari must be simple, bland, spiceless, non-irritating and non-stimulating. Moderation in food is very necessary. Stuffing the stomach is highly deleterious. Fruits are highly beneficial. You should take food only when you are really hungry. The stomach will deceive you sometimes. You may

have false hunger. When you sit for taking meals, you will have no appetite and no relish. Dietetic restrictions and fasting are very useful auxiliaries in controlling the camel mind and in the attainment of Brahmacharya. You should not ignore them or make light of them on any account.

Fasting—a purificatory exercise

Fasting controls passion. Fasting destroys sexual excitement. It calms the emotions. It controls the Indriyas also. Passionate young men and ladies should take recourse to occasional fasting. It will prove highly beneficial. Fasting is a great Tapas. It purifies the mind. It destroys a great multitude of sins. Shastras prescribe Chandrayana Vrata, Krichara Vrata, Ekadasi Vrata and Pradosha Vrata for the purification of the mind. Fasting controls particularly the tongue, which is your deadly enemy. When you fast, do not allow the mind to think of delicious dishes, because then you will not derive much benefit. Fasting overhauls the respiratory, circulatory, digestive and urinary systems. It destroys all the impurities of the body and all sorts of poisons. It eliminates uric acid deposits. Just as impure gold is rendered pure by melting it in the crucible again and again, so also, the impure mind is rendered purer and purer by fasting again and again. Young, robust Brahmacharins should observe fasting whenever passion troubles them. You will have very good meditation during fasting, as the mind is calm. The chief object in fasting is to practice Dhyana rigorously during that period as all the Indriyas are calm. You will have to withdraw all the Indriyas and fix the mind on God. Pray to God for guiding you and throwing a flood of light on the path. Say with Bhav: “O God! Prachodayat, Prachodayat. Guide me, guide me. Trahi, Trahi. Protect me protect me. I am Thine, my Lord!” You will get purity, light, strength and knowledge. Fasting is one of the ten canons of Yoga.

Avoid excessive fasting. It will produce weakness. Use your commonsense. Those who are not able to observe a full fast can fast for nine or twelve hours and can take milk and fruits in the evening or at night.

During fasting, the internal digestive organs such as the stomach, the liver and the pancreas take rest. Epicureans, gluttons and those who are tireless eaters do not allow rest for these organs even for a few minutes. Hence, these organs get diseased soon. Diabetes, albuminuria, dyspepsia and hepatitis are all due to overfeeding. After all, man wants very little on this earth. Ninety per cent of the people in this world take more food than what is absolutely necessary for the body. Overeating has become their habit. All diseases take their origin in overeating. An occasional complete fast is a great desideratum for all to keep up good health, relieve the internal organs and maintain Brahmacharya. Diseases that are pronounced incurable by allopaths and homoeopaths are cured by fasting. Fasting develops will-power. It increases the power of endurance. Manu, the Hindu law-giver, prescribes in his code the remedy of fasting for removal of the five capital sins also.

It is better to drink a large quantity of water, either tepid or cold, according to temperament and inclination, during fasting. It will flush out the kidneys and remove the poison and all sorts of impurities in the body. In Hatha Yoga it is termed as Gata-Suddhi or purification of the flesh-pot, the physical body. You can add half a teaspoonful of soda bicarbonate to the

water. Those who fast for two or three days should not break their fast with any solid food. They should take some kind of fruit juice, either sweet orange juice or pomegranate juice. They should sip the juice slowly. You can take an enema daily during fasting.

Fast for a day to start with. Then slowly increase the number of days according to your strength and capacity. In the beginning you may feel a slight weakness. The first day may be very tiring. You will feel real Ananda, bliss, on the second or the third day. The body will be very, very light. You can turn out more mental work during fasting. Those who are in the habit of fasting will rejoice. On the first day, the mind will tempt you in a variety of ways to eat something or the other. Stand firm. Be bold. Curb the mind at once when it hisses or raises its hood. Do more Japa of Gayatri or any Mantra during fasting. Fasting is more a spiritual Kriya than a physical Kriya from the viewpoint of health. You will have to utilise the fasting days for higher spiritual purposes and in the contemplation of God. Always entertain thoughts of God. Dive deep into the problems of life such as the why and the wherefore of the universe. Enquire: "Who am I? What is this Atman or Brahman? What are the ways and means to attain Knowledge of God? How to approach Him?" Then realize your Nijananda state and rest in purity for ever and ever.

My dear brothers! Will you start the fasting Tapasya from the very second you read these lines?

Peace be unto all beings!

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19. WET DREAMS AND SPERMATORRHOEA

Many young men are troubled by wet dreams or nocturnal emissions and spermatorrhoea. This dire disease, spermatorrhoea, has eaten away the very core of the heart of many brilliant youth, who were once very promising students during the beginning stages of their educational career. This terrible scourge has sapped the vitality or the very essence of many students and even grown-up people and has made them physical, moral and spiritual bankrupts. This deadly curse has stunted the growth of many young people and made them bemoan their past ignorant, vicious habits. This wretched malady has blighted the hopes of many a young person and brought despair, gloom, shattered health and dilapidated constitution.

I receive numerous letters of pathetic tales of dissipated, lost youth. The recent trend in the increase of vulgar, cheap and aphrodisiac literature and obscene films, both Indian and Western, had added to the miseries of misguided youth. Loss of the vital energy creates great fear in their mind. The body becomes weak, memory fails, the face becomes ugly and the young man is not able to remedy his pitiable condition due to shame. But there is no cause for despair. Even if a few of the hints in the following pages are observed, he will develop the correct attitude to life and will lead a disciplined spiritual life and ultimately attain supreme bliss.

Difference between physiological pollution and pathological pollution

Spermatorrhoea is involuntary seminal discharge. Nocturnal discharge, night pollution, Svapna-Dosha, wet dream are all synonymous terms. Ayurvedic doctors call this disease Sukra-Megha. This is due to the evil habits in youth. In severe cases, discharges occur in daytime also. The patient passes semen along with urine during micturition. If there is occasional discharge, you need not be alarmed a bit. This may be due to heat in the body, or the pressure of loaded bowels or bladder on the seminal bags. This is not a pathological condition.

Night pollution is of two kinds, namely, physiological pollution and pathological pollution. In physiological pollution, you will be refreshed. You should not be afraid of this act. You should not mind if the discharge of semen is very occasional. You need not worry about it. This is also a slight flushing of the apparatus or a periodical cleansing through a slight overflow from the reservoir in which the semen is stored up. This act may not be attended with evil thoughts. The person may not be aware of the act during the night. Whereas, in pathological pollution, the act is accompanied by sexual thoughts. Depression follows. There is irritability, languishment, laziness, inability to work and concentrate. Occasional discharges are of no consequence, but frequent nocturnal pollutions cause depression of spirits, debility, dyspepsia, low spirits, loss of memory, severe pain in the back, headache, burning of the eyes, drowsiness and burning sensation at urination or during the flow of semen. The semen becomes very thin.

Causes and consequences

Wet dreams and spermatorrhoea may be due to various causes like constipation, a loaded stomach, irritation-producing or wind-producing food, impure thoughts and long self-abuse done in ignorance.

Seminal weakness, nocturnal emissions, lascivious dreams and all other effects of an immoral life will surely lead one to a miserable state of living if not checked by proper medicines. But these medicines cannot produce a permanent cure. One can get temporary relief during the time one takes the medicine. Even doctors of the West admit that such medicines cannot effect a permanent cure. The moment the medicine is discontinued, the patient will find his disease all the worse. In some cases, the patient becomes impotent by the use of drugs. The only effective permanent cure can be had through the system of ancient Yoga. *Nasti Yogat Param Balam*. There is no strength higher than that of Yoga. The different methods given in this book will enable you to get success if practiced regularly.

Do not be carried away by the pompous advertisements made by quacks and charlatans. Lead a simple natural life. You will become all right soon. Do not spend any money in buying the so-called patent medicines and specifics. They are worthless. Quacks try to exploit the credulous and the ignorant. Do not go to the doctors. Endeavour to qualify yourself as your own doctor. Understand the laws of nature, the principles of hygiene and health. Do not tresspass against the laws of health.

A warning against evil sex habits and outbursts of anger

Avoid all kinds of self-abuse. They drain away your vital energy and leave you like a dead man or like the sugar-cane from which the juice has been extracted. Veerya is indeed a priceless possession. Do not waste it for the sake of a momentary excitement and sensation.

Give up the evil habit at once. You will be entirely ruined if you continue the practice. Open your eyes. Wake up now. Become wise. Shun evil company. Do not cut jokes with women. Practice chaste look. Up to this time you were blind and ignorant. You were in the dark. You had no idea of the disastrous effects of this evil practice. You will lose your eyesight. You will have dimness of vision. You will have shattered nerves.

Do not look at the reproductive Indriya. Do not also touch the generative organ with your hands now and then. This will aggravate your Kama Vasana. When it gets erection, do Mula Bandha and Uddiyana Bandha. Repeat 'Om' mentally several times with meaning. Think of purity. Do twenty Pranayamas. The cloud of impurity will pass off soon.

Sexual excesses and outbursts of anger and hatred should be given up. If the mind is kept cool and calm at all times, you will have wonderful health, strength and virility. Energy is depleted by fits of anger. The cells and tissues are filled with morbid poisonous materials when one loses his temper and entertains deep hatred. Various sorts of physical ailments crop up. The blood becomes hot and thin, and consequently, night pollution results. Various sorts of nervous diseases are attributable to excessive loss of the seminal energy and frequent fits of explosive anger or wrath.

Importance of proper food and evacuation

Most of the diseases take their origin in overeating. Observe moderation in diet. Avoid late suppers. The evening meal should be light and eaten before 6 or 7 p.m. If possible, take milk and fruits only at night. No solid or liquid should be taken after sunset. When you take milk, mix ginger essence in it. Or boil crushed ginger with milk before taking the milk. Give up hot Chutnies, garlic, onion and pungent foodstuffs. Hot curries, chillies and Chutnies make the semen watery and lead to frequent wet dreams. Take bland, soothing, non-irritating simple food. Give up smoking, liquor, tea, coffee, meat and fish.

When there is any inclination for micturition at night, immediately get up to empty the bladder. A loaded bladder is the cause for wet dreams. Before retiring to bed, answer the calls of nature. If there is severe constipation and the bowels are loaded, they will press the *vesiculae seminalis*, and consequently, there will be discharges at night.

To relieve constipation, the use of the enema is most essential. The use of laxatives is not of much benefit as it creates heat in the body.

Never stop the urge to answer calls of nature. If worms are present in the bowels, remove them by a dose of worm powder in the night and take a purgative of castor oil the following morning. This will keep the bowels regular.

Sometimes, the discharges take place on account of excess of heat in the body, excess of walking or travel, eating a large quantity of sweetmeats or chillies and salt. Give up tea, coffee, chillies, excess of sweets and excess of sugar. Avoid dainty dishes, sauces, savouries and pastries. Have occasional fasts, say, once a week. Do not drink even water on those fasting days. Do not ride too much on the bicycle.

Chew pieces of the yellow variety of Harad or myrobalan very often. When there is frequent discharge, dissolve two pinches of camphor in a cup of milk and take it occasionally at night. Take half a seer of milk in the early morning and half a seer at night.

Get up before 4 a.m.

Night pollution generally occurs in the fourth quarter of the night. Those who are in the habit of getting up from bed between 3 and 4 a.m. and doing Japa and Dhyana can never fall a victim to nocturnal pollutions. Make it a point to get up at least at 4 a.m. regularly. Sleep on a coarse bed. Use rough mats.

Sleep on the left side. Allow the Solar Nadi, Pingala, to work throughout the night through the right nostril. In acute cases, sleep on the back until recovery.

If you are a married man, sleep in a separate room. You should never allow your wife to massage your legs at night. This is a dangerous practice.

For protecting the semen, it is essential to wear always a strip of cloth over the private part; for, there will be no night emission and growth of testicle. Therefore, always wear a Langoti or Kaupin or loin cloth. You will not get inflammation or any other disease of the testicles. This will help you in keeping up Brahmacharya. Wear a wet Kaupin at night when you go to bed, if the disease is very troublesome.

It is befitting for a celibate to wear always wooden sandals as thereby the semen will be conserved, eyes will be benefited, life prolonged and holiness and lustre increased.

Take to the Name of the Lord

Practice Japa and meditation in the morning, as soon as you get up, for an hour or two. Also, do this before sleeping at 10 p.m. This is a great purifier. This will strengthen the mind and the nerves. This is the best remedy. Repeat the Mantra: "*Punarmamaitu Indriyam*. Let my lost strength be restored."

Pray to the sun in the early morning before sunrise: "O Lord Suryanarayana, the eye of the world, the eye of the Virat Purusha! Give me health, strength, vigour and vitality." Do

Suryanamaskara in the early morning. Repeat the twelve Names of the sun at sunshine: "*Mitraya Namah. Ravaye Namah. Suryaya Namah. Bhanave Namah. Khagaya Namah. Pushne Namah. Hiranyagarbhaya Namah. Marichaye Namah. Savitre Namah. Adityaya Namah. Bhaskaraya Namah. Arkaya Namah*." Bask in the sun.

The benefits of a hip bath

Take cold hip baths by sitting in a tub of water and keeping the legs outside the tub. This is very invigorating and energising. A cold hip bath tones and soothes the nerves of the genito-urinary system and stops nocturnal discharges in an efficacious manner. This is a general nervine tonic as well, as all the nerves are braced up.

The hip bath can be conveniently managed at home in a big zinc tub. Aged persons and convalescents can use lukewarm water. Wipe the parts with a dry towel and put on warm clothing.

Or stand up to your navel in a river, lake or tank for half an hour. Repeat 'Om' or the Gayatri or any other Mantra. Rub the lower part of the abdomen or belly with a coarse Turkish towel or a piece of Khadi cloth several times. This can be practiced twice daily, morning and evening, in the summer season.

Cold douches, spinal douches and cold shower bath are of immense use in the practice of Brahmacharya. Shower baths can be easily installed at home by fixing the spray apparatus to the tap.

Sirshasana, Sarvangasana, Siddhasana, Sukha-Purvak Pranayama and Uddiyana Bandha are all very effective in eradicating spermatorrhoea. Practice them and realize the incalculable benefits. Practice deep-breathing and Bhastrika Pranayama. Take long walks. Take part in sports.

Some helpful suggestions

Complete cure may take at least one to six months, according to the intensity of the disease. If the disease is of long standing, the cure may take a long time, as Nature's processes are slow, though sure. Whenever you are haunted by sensual thoughts, you should try to replace them by holy thoughts about your favourite deity.

Let any disease be there. Ignore it. Deny it. Think and meditate on the pure Self. Keep yourself fully occupied. Do not give room for the mind to think of the body or the disease. This is the treatment for any kind of disease. Sing Hari's Name in a variety of ways. When you are tired, take to the study of religious books. Do selfless service. Run in the open air. Swim in the river. Remove the stones and pebbles lying on the roads. Write down your Ishta Mantra in a notebook for one hour.

Purify the mind by cultivating devotion to God. Do Japa and meditation. Study spiritual books. Pray to God. Observe Brahmacharya. Do not mix unnecessarily with women. See only the Divine Mother in them. Develop Atrna-Bhava in all.

Avoid cinema, novels, newspapers, bad company, evil talks. Do not look into the mirror frequently. Do not use scents or fancy clothings. Do not attend dance or music parties. Do not look at mating of animals and birds.

Root out love of leisure and ease. Overcome laziness and always keep the body and mind engaged in some useful work. Keeping the mind constantly engaged is one of the great secrets of Brahmacharya. Lead a disciplined, rigorous life. Do not brood over the disease too much. It will pass off. When bad thoughts appear in the mind, repeat the Name of God and pray to Him. Ultimately, the Lord's divine grace and helping hand is the sure antidote for all diseases. Rely on God. Be devoted to purity and piety. Cherish sublime thoughts. Read sacred literature. Naught shall assail you.

This weakness will pass away. Do not be anxious, worried and depressed over it. Depressing thoughts are dangerous. Worry will only weaken you more. Learn lessons from the past and be benefited therefrom. Do not brood over the past and be weakened. Change your angle of vision. Practice enquiry. Meditate on the advantages of celibacy. Think of the lives of Akhanda Brahmacharins like Hanuman, Bhishma and others. Think of the evils of a sensual life—loss of health, shame, disease and death. Cultivate discrimination. You are the child of the Lord of the universe. The bliss is within you. There is not an iota of pleasure in sense objects. Dissociate yourself from the body; identify yourself with the Lord. If your mind is pure and healthy, your body too will be pure and healthy. Therefore, forget the past and take to a new, better life of virtue and spirituality, love of God and aspiration for the higher divine life. Learn to find taste in divine life. Do more Sadhana with greater intensity. You will be a completely changed and blessed person.

20. SOME POWERFUL AIDS TO THE PRACTICE OF CELIBACY

You cannot have perfect celibacy unless you follow the auxiliaries. You have to take particular care about your diet and the company that you keep. Anything that brings impure thoughts in the mind is bad company. Oh aspirants! Fly away from the company of worldly-minded persons. Get away from the bustle of cities and tumultuousness of the world. Those who talk of worldly affairs will quickly pollute you. You mind may waver and begin to wander. You will have a downfall.

Do not read amorous novels or fiction. Do not visit the cinema and the theatre. And do not make friendship with undesirable boys. What you need is a complete change of your vision, your attitude towards the other sex. Behold the Divine Mother in every woman and consider every woman as your own mother.

Control of the palate

First, dietary control. There is an intimate connection between self-control and control of the palate or tongue. He who has controlled the tongue has already controlled all the other organs.

Delicious Rajasic food excites the organ of generation. Give up meat, fish, liquor, smoking. Meat can make a scientist, but never a philosopher, a sage or a Sattvic Person. Meat excites the passions.

Gradually give up salt and tamarind. Salt excites passion and emotion. Salt excites and strengthens the Indriyas. Renunciation of salt brings in a cool condition of the mind and the nerves. It helps meditation. You will suffer a bit in the beginning. Later on you will enjoy a saltless diet. Practice at least for six months. In this way, you will be able to realize your own Svarupa quickly. All that is wanted of you is sincere and earnest effort. May Sri Krishna give you courage and strength to tread the path of spirituality and attain the goal of life!

Do not overload your stomach at night. The night meals should be very light. Half a litre of milk or some fruits will constitute a good regimen or menu at night.

Both for Brahmacharya and tongue-control, take a few Tulasi leaves early in the morning. In the evening take Neem leaves. Start with one leaf, increase it to ten, one per day. Take ten for a couple of months; then you can increase it to twenty. This is very good.

Avoid bad company

Obscene pictures, vulgar words, and novels which deal with love stories excite passion and produce ignoble, mean, undesirable sentiments in the heart. Whereas, the sight of a good picture of Lord Krishna or Lord Rama or Lord Jesus and hearing of the sublime songs of Surdas, Tulasidas and Thyagaraja induce noble sentiments and sincere devotion in the heart, produce a divine thrill and tears of joy and Prem, and elevate the mind to Bhava Samadhi instantaneously. Do you see clearly the difference now?

What is the state of your mind when you attend a ball or nautch party or when you read “The Mysteries of the Court of London”? What is your state of mind when you attend the Satsanga party of Swami Jayendrapuriji Maharaj of Benares or when you are at Rishikesh on the banks of the Ganga in a secluded place or when you study the soul-elevating classical Upanishads? Compare and contrast your mental states. Remember, friend, that there is nothing so utterly ruinous to the soul as evil company. Aspirants should shun ruthlessly all sorts of evil company. They should not listen to the stories concerning women, the luxurious ways of rich persons, pungent food, vehicles, politics, silken clothing, flowers, scents and so on, because the mind gets easily excited. It will begin to imitate the ways of luxurious persons. Desires will crop up. Attachment will also come in.

The cinema produces an evil tendency in man. He cannot remain even for a day without attending a show. His eyes want to see some half-nude pictures and some kinds of colours; and his ears want a little music. Young girls and boys become passionate when they see the actors in the films kissing and hugging. Those who want to develop themselves in the spiritual line should entirely shun the cinema. They should not attend even the so-called religious films. They are not really religious films. It is a kind of trick to attract people and collect money. What is the spiritual calibre of the actors there? Spiritual people only can bring out impressive stories with good morals that can elevate the minds of the spectators.

Put an end to going to exciting films if you have got that habit. Do not witness vulgar sensuous scenes wherever it may be. Do not indulge in seeing naked pictures. All these tend to increase passion and deplete Veerya. You should strictly avoid these.

Novel-reading is another evil habit. Those who are in the habit of reading novels that deal with passion and love cannot remain even for a single second without novel-reading. They always want their nerves to be tickled with some sensational feelings. Novel-reading fills the mind with base, lustful thoughts and excites passion. It is a great enemy of peace.

Many people have started circulating libraries for distribution of novels on a small subscription basis. They have not at all realized how much harm they are doing to the country. It is better they chalk out another vocation to eke out their livelihood. They spoil the minds of young men by the distribution of these worthless novels, which help to excite their passion. The whole atmosphere is polluted. Severe punishment is awaiting them in the Yama Loka.

Do not read novels. They taint the mind. Novels are the chains of Western civilization to capture the victim unaware in its glittering fetters. Do not read those journals which excite you lower instincts.

Immoral songs produce a very bad, deep impression in the mind. Aspirants should run away from places where vicious songs are sung.

Strive your best to divert your mind and eyes from external objects that prompt sexual desires. Give up the sort of reading, conversation, imagination and associations that are likely to stimulate the sexual desire. Do not converse with those who are eager to convey irritating news and disturb your mental poise. Live with spiritual advanced men and stop reading all books except those that are directly spiritual.

When thoughts of lust arise in the mind, do not wrestle with them. The best method is to ignore them. If you are not successful in doing so, be in the company of someone who is superior to you spiritually, who is more advanced than you spiritually. If you go into seclusion, the mind will chase you and down you in sensual thoughts. You will lose your balance. Be careful. The sensual thoughts will pass away with a little vigilance.

Watch the thoughts

An evil thought enters the mind and there comes an erection of the Indriya. Is this not a marvel? Because this occurs very often, it does not appear to you as a miracle or a marvel. You have ignored this vital point on account of your ignorance.

Mind is a great electricity battery. It is a big dynamo indeed. It is a powerhouse. The nerves are insulated wires to transmit the electric currents, nerve impulses, to various organs, tissues and the extremities, hands, legs and feet.

There is a vibration of thought in the mind owing to the vibration of psychic Prana. This force of thought is transmitted with a tremendous lightning speed along the nerves to the organs. The physical body is fleshy mould prepared by the mind in accordance with the Samskaras and Vasanas for its own experience and enjoyment. The mind sways the organs of an undisciplined passionate man who has boisterous revolting Indriyas. It becomes an obedient faithful servant of a trained, developed Yogi.

An ever-vigilant Brahmachari should always watch his thoughts very carefully. He should never allow even a single bad thought to enter the gate of the mental factory. If his mind is ever fixed on his Dhyeya or Lakshya or object of meditation, there is no room for the entry of an evil thought. Even if an evil thought has entered the trapdoor of the mind, he should not allow the mind to assume a mental state with this idea. If he falls a victim, the thought-current will be transmitted to the physical body. Burning of the Indriyas and the physical nervous system will follow. This is a serious condition.

The bad thought should be nipped in the bud by supplanting counter divine thoughts. It should not be allowed to penetrate the physical body. If your will is strong, the evil thought can be driven at once. Pranayama, vigorous prayer, Vichara, Atmic contemplation, Saguna meditation and Satsanga can nip the evil thoughts in the bud at the threshold of the mental factory. The combat will be keen in the beginning. When you become purer and purer, when your will-power develops, when you develop more Sattva or purity and when you have a habitual meditative mood, you will be established in physical and mental Brahmacharya. Understand the power of thought and utilise it profitably. Understand the ways of the mind. Learn how to use the pure will. Become a vigilant, dexterous watchman of your thoughts. Curb them before they raise their heads out of the mind through skill and wisdom.

It is the mind that really does all actions. A desire arises in your mind and then you think. Then you proceed to act. The determination of the mind is put into action. First there is Sankalpa or thought and then comes action. Therefore, do not allow the sexual thoughts, to enter the mind.

That which is thought of is spoken by the tongue. That which the tongue speaks of, the organs of action do. That is the reason why it is said in the Vedas: “Let my mind think of auspicious things.” Entertain sublime divine thoughts. The old evil sexual thought will gradually vanish, just as the old nail in a plank goes away by inserting over it a new nail.

Seek Satsanga or good company

The glory of Satsanga or association with the wise saints, Yogins, Sannyasins and Mahatmas is indescribable. The glory and power of Satsanga is described in various ways in the Bhagavata, the Ramayana and other scriptures. Even a moment's company with wise people is quite sufficient to overhaul the old vicious Samskaras of worldly-minded people. The magnetic aura, the spiritual vibrations and the powerful thought-currents of developed adepts produce a tremendous influence on the minds of worldlings. The personal contact of Mahatmas is a blessing in reality for worldly persons. Service of saints purifies the minds of passionate men rapidly. Satsanga elevates the mind to magnanimous heights. Just as a single matchstick bums huge bundles of cotton in a few seconds, so also, the company of saints burns all ignorance, all thoughts and Samskaras of passion and evil actions within a short time. This is the reason why Sankara and others have spoken so highly of Satsanga in all their books.

If you cannot get good Satsanga in your own place, you can visit places of pilgrimage like Rishikesh, Benares, Nasik, Prayag, Haridwar. Study of books written by realized persons will also be tantamount to Satsanga. The only potent specific for inducing burning Vairagya and desire for liberation is Satsanga.

Cultivate Viveka and Vairagya

One should try to get Viveka or discrimination between the real Self and the unreal impure body. The aspirant should point out to the mind the defects of a sexual life, namely, loss of energy, enervation of the senses, disease, birth and death, attachment and various sorts of miseries. He should remind himself again and again about the parts of the body of woman—flesh, blood, bone, excreta, urine, pus and phlegm. These ideas should be hammered into the mind repeatedly. The aspirant should always think of the ever-pure immortal Atman and the glory of the spiritual life, namely, the attainment of immortality, eternal bliss and supreme peace. Gradually the mind will be weaned from looking at a woman, however beautiful she might be. The mind will shudder to look at a woman with an evil thought. Ladies also should undergo the above practices to get themselves established in purity.

A Viveki does not note any difference between a male and a female. The same Tattvas—passion, anger, greed and Moha—that are present in a man are found in the female also. It is only a lustful man who is filled with burning passion that finds imaginary differences. The differences are all mental creations or Kalpita Bheda.

Nothing can tempt you in this world if you develop Vairagya, if you subdue your Indriyas, and if you shun the unreal, impermanent sensual enjoyments and pleasures of this fleeting world as dung, as poison. You will have no attraction for women and other earthly objects. Lust will be unable to take hold of you. You will have eternal peace and infinite bliss.

Constantly remember: "Through the grace of God, I am becoming purer and purer, every day. Pleasures come but not to stay. Mortal flesh is only clay. Everything will pass away. Brahmacharya is the only way." Develop Viveka and Vairagya.

Aspirants should study Bhartrihari's "Vairagya Satakam" and other works on Vairagya. This will induce Vairagya in the mind. Remembrance of death and the pains of Samsara also will help you to a considerable extent. It will not be out of place here to draw the reader's attention to some Buddhist monks who always keep a human skull with them. This is to cause Vairagya in them and to remind them of the impermanent and perishable nature of human life.

A philosopher once kept in his hands the skull of a lady and began to philosophize thus: "O skull! Some time back you tempted me with your shiny skin and rosy cheeks. Now, where are thy charms? Where are those honeyed lips and lotus-like eyes now?" Thus he developed intense Vairagya. If you analyze the different parts of the human body and keep a picture of flesh and bones before your mind's eye, you will have no attachment at all for your body or the body of a female. Why not try this method?

Remembrance of the skeleton and the dead body of a woman will induce Vairagya in your mind. The body has come out of the filthy discharge. It is full of impurities. In the end, it is reduced to ashes. If you remember this, Vairagya will dawn in your mind. Attraction for women will gradually vanish. If you place before your mind the sickly figure of a woman or the picture of a very old woman, you will develop Vairagya. Remember the pains of Samsara, the unreality of objects, and the bondage that comes from attachment to wife and children. Try any method that suits you best.

Sit down and think, calmly and honestly, what beauty there is in a woman whose body is composed of flesh, bones, nerves, fat, marrow and blood. Where is the beauty in the same woman when she becomes old? Look at the condition of the eyes and the body of a woman after an attack of fever for seven days! What is the state of her beauty? Where is the beauty if she does not take bath for a week? The stink is abominable. Look at the senile woman aged eighty five who is sitting at the corner, with rotten eyes, shrunken cheeks and skin! Analyze the parts of a woman, realize their true nature.

Woman is the greatest cause of delusion. Women are the flames of vice. They are burning fire, which destroys man like a dry straw. They burn from a long distance; so they are more dangerous than fire. The lovely damsel is like a poisonous drug that destroys life by causing lustful intoxication and clouding the power of discrimination. This mysterious world began with woman and has woman for its sustenance. How, without renunciation of woman, is it possible to attain the eternal bliss of Brahman? The bodies of those handsome damsels who are so much fondled by foolish men are taken to the cemetery after their Pranas depart. Beasts and worms feed upon their flesh. Jackals and kites tear off their skin. Without renunciation of woman, it is impossible to have Self-realization.

A note of clarification

Ladies should not be offended when they read these lines. I have only reproduced the teachings of Sankaracharya and Dattatreya. I only want to impress upon both the sexes the force

and the glory of Brahmacharya and the evil effect of lust. I have great regard and admiration for women.

Brahmacharya should be practiced by both men and women. Women also can keep a mental picture of the component parts of the body of a male in order to create in themselves disgust for the physical body of a male and to develop Vairagya.

Mere condemning of lust is not sufficient to wean the mind from sexual craving. Remember this point well. Lust is potent. Lust is virulent. Lust is formidable. Lust is uncontrollable by persons of weak will. One should be aware also of the ways of Maya, which entangle him in her net or snare. A woman should be aware of the charms of a man which entice her and make her a prey to man and man should be aware of the charms of a woman which entice him and make him a prey to woman. A woman is a temptress for man and a man is a tempter for woman. Man also has much charm in him to entrap a woman. Man appears more beautiful in the eyes of a woman than a woman in the eyes of a man. Man also tries to entrap a woman by his dress, ties and bows, by his smile, outward show of affection, glances, gestures, flowery words, various ways of dressing his hair and other tricks.

Lust is a potent force, very difficult to be got rid of. That is the reason why the Sastras and saints censure and condemn women in order to create dispassion and discrimination in men and wean them from lustful tendencies and aggressive attacks. Sri Sankara, Sri Dattatreya, Sri Rama, Sri Tulasidas have all criticised women not out of hatred, prejudice or dislike, but out of compassion for elevating people from the quagmire of Samsara. Their criticism of women implies and includes criticism of man also. Their criticism aims at weaning the minds of worldly persons from sexual sin and creating disgust for sexual pleasure, and dispassion for worldly objects. This is misunderstood by people.

The same scriptures and saints who censure women in one place praise them in another. They say, “Women should be honoured. They are Ardhanginis. They are manifestations of Sakti or the energy of the Lord. Only those who honour women can attain prosperity.” Therefore, O women! Try to know the heart of the scriptures and the saints and become wise.

The minds of young people are saturated with impure Samskaras and Vasanas owing to vicious company and the false modern civilization. Even the company or talk of a woman is quite sufficient to drag the mind into vicious thoughts. So, I have to place before the minds of the vast majority such a mental picture that the very company of women will do havoc. When I say that a woman is only a leather bag, I do not hate women in any way. It is only to produce disgust and induce Vairagya. Really, a woman should be adored as Mother Sakti. She is the creatrix, generatrix and nourisher of the universe. She must be revered. In India, religion is preserved and maintained only through the devotional element in women. Devotion is a fundamental characteristic of Hindu ladies. Hate lust, but not women.

In the beginning, till you acquire Vairagya and Viveka, you must treat the company of woman as poison. When you obtain Viveka and Vairagya, then lust cannot take hold of you.

You will see and realize, "*Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma*. All is Brahman only." You will have Atma-Drishti. The sex idea will then vanish.

A vow is a great help

A vow of celibacy will give you sure protection against temptation. It is a strong weapon to attack lust. If you do not take a vow of celibacy, the mind will tempt you at any moment. You will have no strength to resist the temptation and you will become a sure victim. He who is weak and effeminate is afraid of taking the vow. He brings in various excuses and says, "Why should I be bound by a vow? My will is strong and powerful. I can resist any sort of temptation. I am doing Upasana. I am practising will culture." He repents in the long run. He has no control over the senses. That man only, in whom the subtle desire for the object to be renounced lurks in the corners of the mind, brings in such sort of excuses. You must have right understanding, discrimination and dispassion. Then only your renunciation will be lasting and permanent. If your renunciation is not the outcome of discrimination and dispassion, the mind will be simply waiting for an opportunity to get back the object that has been renounced.

If you are weak, take a vow of celibacy for a month and then extend it to three months. You will gain some strength now. You will be able to prolong the period to six months. Gradually you will be able to extend the vow to one or two or three years. Sleep separately and do vigorous Japa, Kirtan and meditation daily. You will hate lust now. You will experience freedom and indescribable joy. Your partner-in-life also should do Japa, meditation and Kirtan daily.

O Mohan, you have done an unpardonable crime in breaking the vow of celibacy. How can there be religion or spirituality where there is passion? You are an old man. Why should you repeat shamelessly that old ignoble act, bringing this excuse: "Old Vasanas are powerful; circumstances are strong." Nobody will hear your answer. You will have to curb your passion whenever it raises its hood. May Lord Siva give you strength to control this dire enemy and to continue the spiritual Sadhana.

Will culture and auto-suggestion

If you can render your will pure, strong and irresistible by eliminating desires, by eradicating Raga-Dvesha, by reducing your wants and by practising Titiksha, passion will die. Will is a powerful enemy of passion.

Lust takes its origin from impure resolution. Indulgence strengthens it. When you resolutely turn away from it, it vanishes and dies.

Sit alone in your meditation room. Close your eyes. Slowly repeat again and again the following formulae. Let the mind dwell on the significance of the formulae also. Saturate the mind and intellect with these ideas. Your whole system—flesh, blood, bones, nerves and cells—should powerfully vibrate with the following ideas:

I am all-purity, Suddhoham	Om Om Om
Sexless Atman I am	Om Om Om
There is neither lust nor sexual Vasana in Atman	Om Om Om
Lust is mental Vikara; I am a Sakshi of this Vikara	Om Om Om
I am Asanga	Om Om Om
My will is pure, strong and irresistible	Om Om Om
I am fully established in physical and mental Brahmacharya	Om Om Om
I am feeling the purity now	Om Om Om

You can have a sitting at night also. Sit for ten minutes in the beginning. Gradually increase the period to half an hour. Keep up the Bhav during work also.

Write down on a piece of paper, in bold types, the word "Om Purity" six times. Keep the paper in your pocket. Read it several times during the course of the day. Fix it also in a prominent place in your house. Have the word image "Om Purity" clearly before the mind. Remember several times daily the Brahmachari-saints and their powerful actions. Think over the multifarious advantages of a pure life of Brahmacharya and the disadvantages and evils of an impure life. Never leave the practice. Be regular and systematic. Gradually you will become purer and purer and ultimately you will become an Oordhvareta Yogi. Be patient.

Daily feel: "Through the grace of God, I am becoming better and better, every day, in every way". This is auto-suggestion. This is another effective method.

Change the Drishti or angle of vision

You should entertain the Mother-Bhav or Isvari-Bhav or Atma-Bhav towards females. Women also should entertain Pitha-Bhav or Isvar-Bhav or Atma-Bhav towards males.

Sister-Bhav will not suffice. You may fail. Keeping of sister-Bhav in man and brother-Bhav in women will not help much in the eradication of sex attraction and impure thoughts. The sister-Bhav has deceived and deluded many. Pure love will degenerate at any moment into passion when one is careless and non-vigilant. Cobra-Bhav only will help the Sadhakas to a very great extent. After cobra-Bhav comes mother-Bhav in man and father-Bhav in women. Then lastly comes Atma-Bhav in both. Real struggling aspirants only can realize this well, but not dry philosophers.

The cultivation of the Bhav is very difficult. You may fail to develop the Bhav that all women are your mothers and sisters one hundred and one times. It does not matter. Stick to your practice tenaciously. You are bound to succeed eventually. You will have to destroy the old mind and build a new mind. Nevertheless you will have to do it if you want to attain immortality and eternal bliss. You will surely succeed if you are fiery in your resolve and if you have an iron determination. The Bhav will gradually manifest by constant practice. Soon you will be established in that Bhav. Now you are safe.

A man or a woman should practice self-analysis and self-examination. They should have a proper understanding of the ways in which lust operates and plays, and the things and emotions which excite passion and the manner in which one falls a victim to the other. Then only control of lust is possible.

The mind will again try to do some mischief inwardly. It is very diplomatic. It is very difficult to find out its ways and secret underground operations. It demands a subtle intellect, and careful repeated introspection and vigilant watch. Whenever the mental image of a woman crops up in your mind with evil thoughts, repeat mentally, "*Om Durga Devyai Namah*" and do mental prostrations. Gradually, old evil thoughts will die. Whenever you see any woman, entertain this Bhav and repeat mentally this Mantra. Your Drishti or look will become chaste. All women are manifestations of the World Mother. Destroy the idea that a woman is an object of enjoyment and substitute the idea that she is an object of worship and a manifestation of Mother Durga or Kali.

Change the Bhav, change the mental attitude. You will have heaven on earth. You will be established in Brahmacharya. This is an important method for becoming a true Brahmachari. See Atman in all women. Reject all names and forms and take only the underlying essence, Asti-Bhati-Priya or Sat-Chit-Ananda. All names and forms are unreal. They are unreal like shadows, water in the rnirage and blueness in the sky.

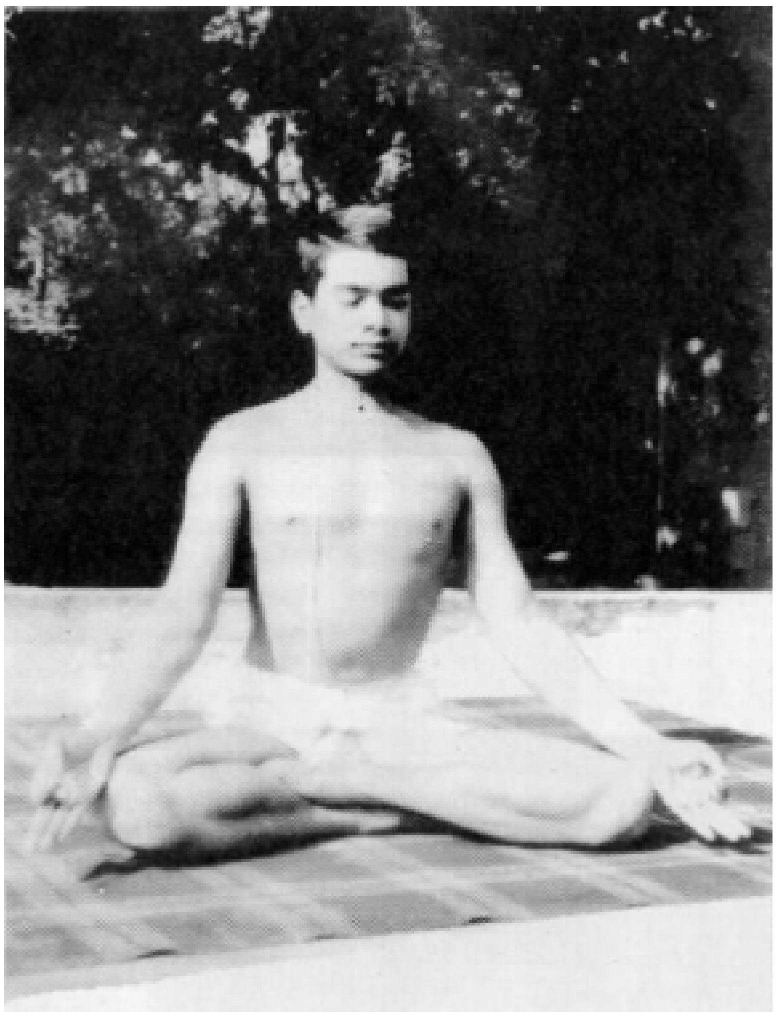
For a scientist, a woman is a mass of electrons only. For a Vaiseshika philosopher of Rishi Kanada's school of thought, she is a conglomeration of atoms—Paramanu, Dvyanu, Tryanu. For a tiger, she is an object of prey. For a passionate husband, she is an object of enjoyment. For a crying child, she is an affectionate mother who gives milk, sweets and other indulgences. For a jealous sister-in-law or mother-in-law, she is an enemy. For a Viveki or a Vairagi, she is a combination of flesh, bone, urine, faecal matter, pus, perspiration, blood and phlegm. For a full-blown Jnani, she is Sat-Chit-Ananda Atman.

Passion will arise when you think of the body of a female. When you are in the company of ladies, think of the one immortal pure Self of Atman that is hidden in the bodies of the ladies. Constantly make the endeavour. The sex idea will gradually vanish, and with it, the attraction and lust also. This is the most potent method to eradicate passion and the sex idea, Mentally repeat the formula, "*Ek Sat-Chit-Ananda Atman*." This will lead to the annihilation of passion and to the Vedantic realization of unity or oneness also.

There is neither sex nor sexual Vasana in Brahman. Brahman is Nitya-Suddha, eternally pure: By constant thinking on that sexless Atman, you will be established in Brahmacharya. This is the most powerful and effective method. This is the best kind of Sadhana for those who know the right technique of Vichara. But, only advanced students in the path of Jnana Yoga can rely on the method of Brahma Vichara alone for the destruction of passion. For the vast majority of persons, a combined method is very congenial and healthy. When the enemies are very powerful, a combined method of lathis, pistols, shot-guns, machine-guns, submarines, torpedoes, bombs and poisonous gases is used for the destruction of the enemies. So also, in the destruction of this powerful enemy, passion, a combined method is absolutely necessary.

21. HATHA YOGA TO THE RESCUE

The regular practice of select Yogasanas and Pranayama exercises will help considerably in one's effort to check the sexual impulse. Sirshasana and Sarvangasana will help you a lot in making you an Oordhvaretas. They are also termed as Vipareeta Karani Mudras. They are specially designed by our Rishis of yore such as Gheranda, Matsyendra and Goraksha to make us Oordhvaretas. And by Pranayama, the mind gradually proceeds from the gross to the subtle. It therefore exercises a wholesome check upon sexual irritation. When some evil thought disturbs your mind, at once take to Padmasana or Siddhasana and practice Pranayama. The thought will leave you immediately.

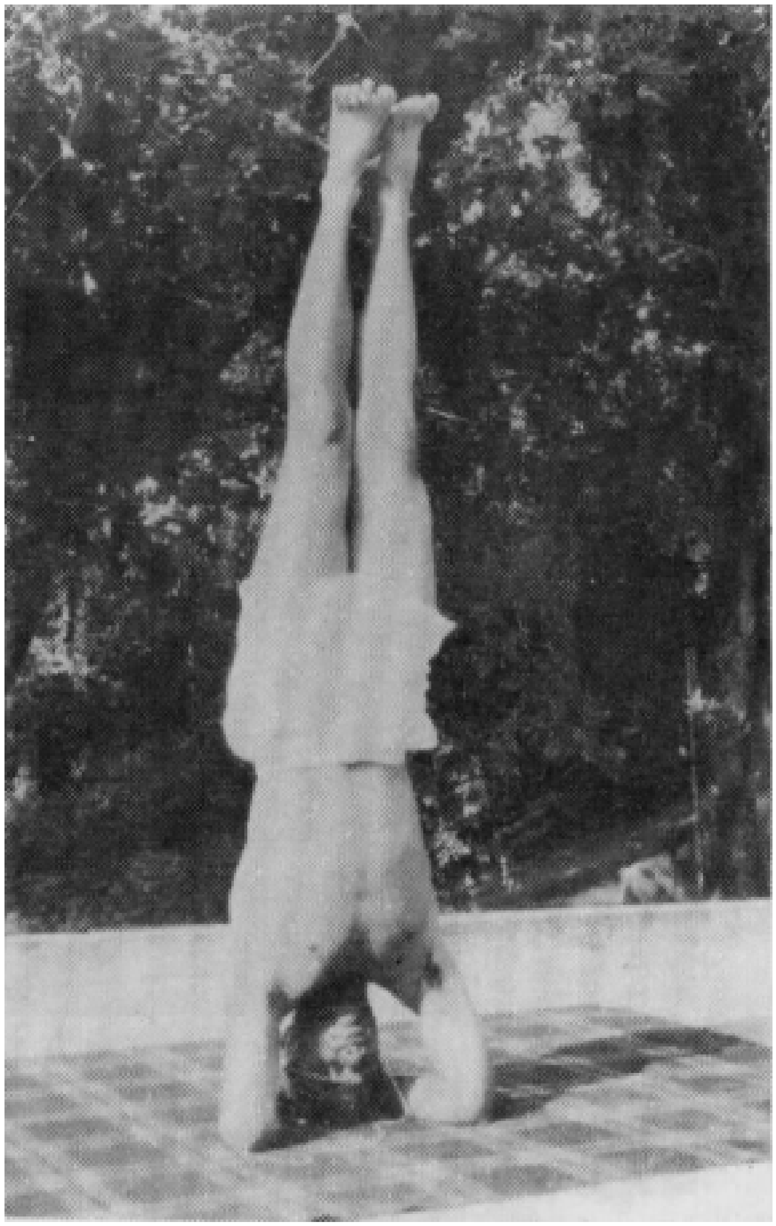


Siddhasana

This Asana is highly eulogized by Yogins for the practice of Brahmacharya. It will help one in controlling his passion and checking nocturnal discharges and in making him an Oordhvareta Yogi. This Asana is useful for sitting during Japa and meditation.

Place the left heel at the anus. Keep the right heel at the root of, or just above, the generative organ. Keep the trunk, neck and head straight. Place the hands on the right heel.

Sit for half an hour to start with and then slowly increase the period to three hours. Sitting for three hours in one Asana is termed Asana Jaya or mastery over Asana.



Sirshasana

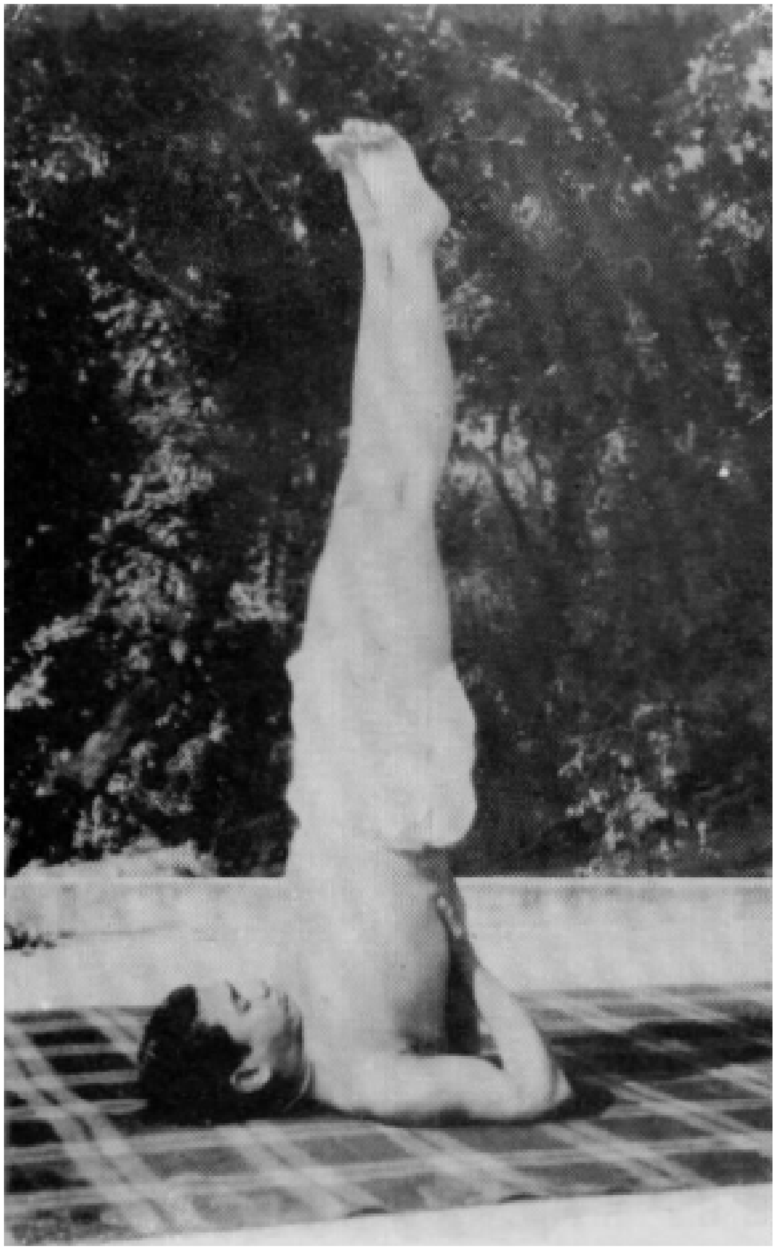
This is the king of all Asanas. The advantages that are derived from this Asana are incalculable and indescribable. This is specially designed for stopping nocturnal discharges and helping the flow of semen towards the brain in the form of Ojas Sakti or spiritual energy.

Spread a folded blanket on the ground. Make a finger-lock and keep it over the blanket. Now place the top of your head between the two hands. Slowly raise the legs up without any jerk till they become vertical. Get the help of a wall in the beginning of your practice or ask one of your friends to catch hold of your legs. After due practice, you will be able to keep up balance. When the Asana is over, bring down the legs very, very slowly. When you remain in the Asana, breathe only through the nose.

Irregular Kumbhaka, Rechaka and Puraka—retention, exhalation and inhalation—will make your Asana unsteady.

Do this Asana when your stomach is empty or light. Many chronic, incurable diseases of the stomach, bowels, lungs, heart, kidneys, genito-urinary system, ears and eyes are cured by the regular practice of this Asana.

When you find your legs tossing, retain the breath for a short time. Then the legs will become steady.

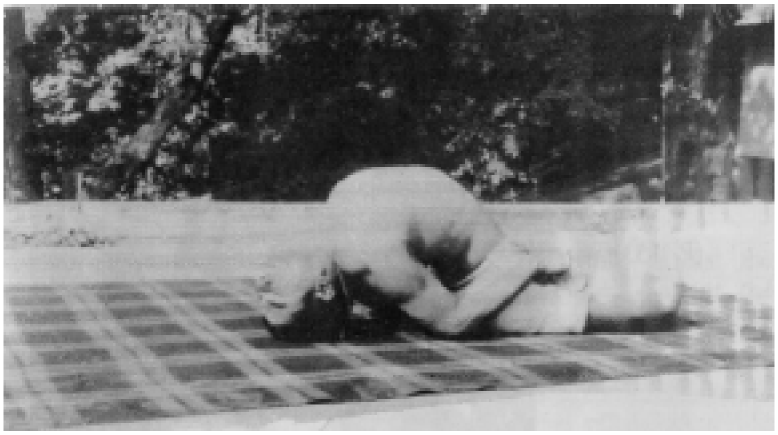


Sarvangasana

This is an important pose, which can help you assuredly in the practice of Brahmacharya. The digestive, circulatory and nervous systems are at once toned up in a mysterious manner by the practice of Sirshasana and Sarvangasana. This is no Arthavada or Rochak Sabdha or mere eulogy, my dear friends! Practice and feel the beneficial influence yourself. This is the best remedy for wet dreams and various other diseases. There is a healthy glow in the eyes of the practitioner and a peculiar lustre, charm, beauty and magnetic aura in his face.

Spread a blanket on the ground. Lie on the back quite flat. Slowly raise the legs. Lift the trunk, hips and legs. Support the back with the hands on either side. The whole weight of the

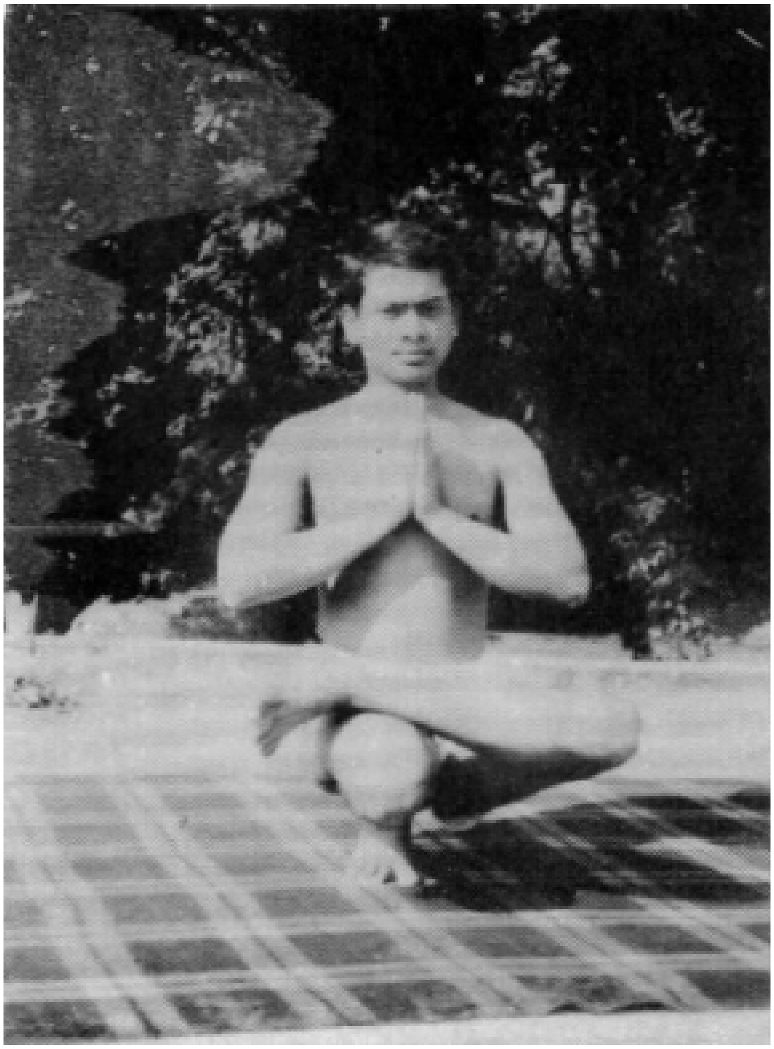
body will now rest on the shoulders and elbows. Keep the legs steady. Press the chin against the chest firmly. Breathe slowly, only through the nostrils. Begin with five minutes and try to remain in the Asana as long as you can.



Matsyasana

This must be practiced soon after Sarvangasana. It will relieve stiffness of the neck and all crampy conditions of the cervical region caused by long practice of Sarvangasana. This gives a natural massage to the congested parts of the neck and shoulders. Further, it ensures that the student derives the maximum benefits from his practice of Sarvangasana.

Sit in Padmasana over the blanket by keeping the right foot over the left thigh and the left foot over the right thigh. Then lie flat on the back. Stretch the head back so that the top of your head rests on the ground firmly on one side and the buttocks only on the other, thus making a bridge of the trunk. Place the hands over the thighs or catch hold of the toes. You will have to give a good twist to the back. Matsyasana is the destroyer of many diseases. This is very useful for general health also.



Padangushthasana

Place the left heel right in the centre of the perineum—the space between the anus and the external organ of generation. Put the whole weight of the body on the toes, particularly the left big toe. Place the right foot over the left thigh, near the knee. Sit carefully now, keeping the balance. If you find it difficult to practice this Asana independently, you can take the help of a bench or sit by the side of a wall. Place the hands on the sides of the hips. Breathe slowly.

The perineal space is four inches in breadth. Underneath this space lies the Veerya Nadi that carries semen from the testes. By pressing this Nadi with the heel, the flow of semen outside is checked. A steady practice of this Asana removes wet dreams and spermatorrhoea and makes one an Oordhvareta Yogi. A combination of Asanas such as Sirshasana, Sarvangasana and Siddhasana is very conducive to keeping up Brahmacharya. Each has its own specific action. Siddhasana acts on the testes and its cells and prevents the formation of semen. Sirshasana and Sarvangasana help the flow of semen towards the brain. Padangushthasana acts on the spermatic duct effectively.

Instruction on Asana practice

Physical exercises draw the Prana out. Asanas send the Prana in. Asanas are not only physical, but also spiritual. They help a long way in controlling the senses, mind and body. The body, nerves and muscles are purified. If you do Dhand and Bhaitak five hundred times a day for five years, they will not, in any way, produce any spiritual experience. Ordinary physical exercises develop only the superficial muscles of the body. One can become a sandow with a beautiful physique by practising physical exercise. But, Asanas are intended for physical as well as spiritual development.

Spread a blanket on the floor and practice Asanas over it. Use a thin pillow under the head when you do Sirshasana. Wear a Langoti or Kaupin or loin-cloth when you practice Asanas. Avoid using spectacles and too many clothes.

Those who practice Sirshasana for a long time should take some light tiffin or a cup of milk after finishing the Asana. Be regular and systematic in your practices. Those who practice by fits and starts will not derive any benefit. Regularity in the practice is very necessary if one wants to realize the maximum benefits of Asanas. Generally, people practice for two months in the beginning with great interest and enthusiasm and then leave off. This is a sad mistake.

Asanas should be done on an empty or light stomach or at least three hours after food. You can advantageously combine Japa and Pranayama during the practice of Asanas. Then it becomes real Yoga. Asanas can be practiced on the sandy beds of rivers, open airy places, and by the seaside also. If you practice Asanas and Pranayama in a room, see that the room is not congested. The room should be clean and well-ventilated.

In the beginning of the practice, do each Asana for a minute or two only and then gradually and slowly increase the period as much as you can.

Avoid too much exertion when you do all the Yogic exercises. There must be joy and exhilaration throughout your practices.

Here I have given you instructions for a few select Asanas that are very useful for maintaining Brahmacharya. For detailed instructions on nearly ninety Asanas, refer to my book "*Yoga Asanas*".

Mula Bandha

Press the Yoni or the space between the anus and the generative organ with the left heel. Contract the anus. Place the right heel at the root of the organ of generation. This is Mula Bandha.

The Apana Vayu, which does the function of ejection of excreta, has a natural tendency to move downwards. Through the practice of Mula Bandha, the Apana Vayu is made to move upwards by contracting the anus and forcibly drawing it upwards. Mula Bandha is highly useful

for maintaining Brahmacharya. This is practiced during inhalation in Pranayama and during Japa and meditation also.

Mula Bandha is a Yogic Kriya, which helps the Yogic student to take the Apana and the sex energy upwards. The tendency of the Apana is to flow downwards. This downward flow of Apana and the sex energy is checked by the practice of Mula Bandha. The Yogic student sits on Siddhasana and takes the Apana and the sex energy upwards by contracting the anus and practising Kumbhaka or retention of breath. By long practice, the downward seminal flow is checked and semen is sublimated or transmuted into Ojas Sakti or spiritual energy, which helps contemplation. This Bandha checks wet dreams and helps in maintaining Brahmacharya.

Such a beneficial Yogic practice prescribed by the Rishis and Yogis of yore is misused by the people and misprescribed by some inexperienced, ignorant Yogic culturists of the present day. They teach this Kriya to the lay public to achieve their selfish ends and to have a comfortable living. They pompously advertise that people can retain the vital fluid for a long time and have intense sexual enjoyment for a protracted period through this Kriya. They teach this Bandha to the rich householders. Some of the deluded householders are allured by such statements of these Yogic charlatans - whose goal is money-making for comfortable living - and they take recourse to this Kriya. They indulge more on the strength of this Kriya, lose their vitality and come to grief and destruction in a very short period. By injudicious practice of this Kriya, the Apana is dislocated and they get various diseases like colic, constipation and piles.

These Yogic culturists have done intense harm to the public. Instead of prescribing this useful Kriya of the Rishis and Yogis of yore for the attainment of Brahmacharya, and for success in Pranayama in the form of Brahmacharya these deluded souls have excited the householders to become more passionate and to have more indulgence. They have brought a slur on the science of Yoga and Yogis.

They argue: “We must move according to the modern times. People want this. They like such Kriyas. They are benefited. They are more happy by practising this Kriya.” Wonderful philosophy indeed! This is the philosophy of the Epicureans and the Charvakas. This is the philosophy of Virochana. This is the philosophy of flesh.

O ignorant man! Open your eyes. Wake up from the deep slumber of ignorance. Do not be carried away by the sweet speeches and indecent demonstrations of these Yogic charlatans or pseudo-Gurus. You will be ruined. Give up such practices. Preserve the vital fluid. Turn it into Ojas through Japa, Kirtan, Pranayama, Vichara. Lead a pious life. Life is meant for a higher purpose. Life is meant for Self-realization.

O Yogic culturists! Do not mislead people. Call yourselves as the noble followers or disciples of the revered Rishis of olden times. Do not prescribe these Kriyas for base ends. Be noble and magnanimous. Aim high. Become true Yogis. Sensible and cultured people will laugh at you if you disseminate Yogic knowledge in this manner. Give them knowledge of the ways to maintain Brahmacharya. Make them real Yogis. People will revere you and appreciate your selfless work.

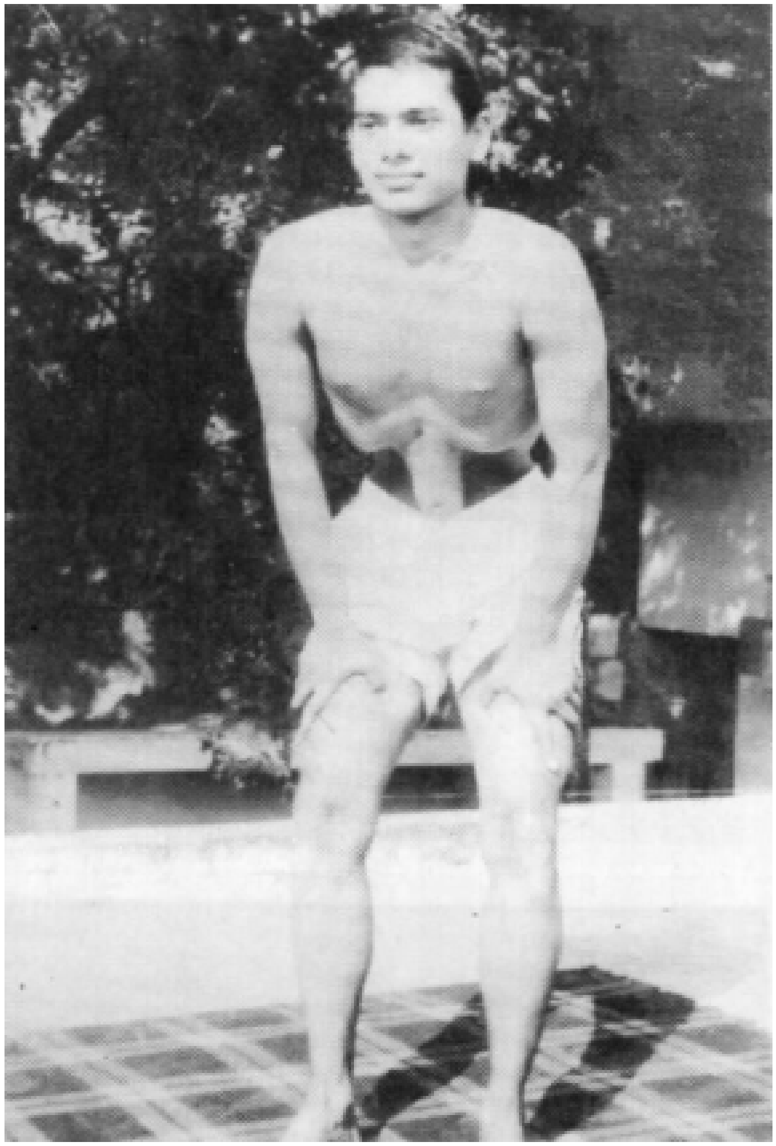
Jalandhara Bandha

Contract the throat. Press the chin firmly against the chest. This is practiced at the end of Puraka and at the beginning of Kumbhaka. Next to this comes the Uddiyana Bandha. These Bandhas are something like three stages of one exercise.

Uddiyana Bandha

Empty the lungs by a strong and forcible expiration. Now, contract and forcibly draw up the intestines and also the navel towards the back so that the abdomen rests against the back of the body high up in the thoracic cavity.

This Bandha can be practiced in a standing posture also. In this case, bend a little forward, resting the hands on the thighs and keeping the legs a little apart. These three Bandhas are a good combination. The description of Nauli Kriya can be taken as the next stage of Uddiyana Bandha.



Nauli Kriya

Uddiyana Bandha can be done in a sitting posture also, but Nauli generally is done while standing. Keep the right leg a foot apart from the left and rest your hands on the thighs, thus making a slight curve of the back. Then do Uddiyana Bandha.

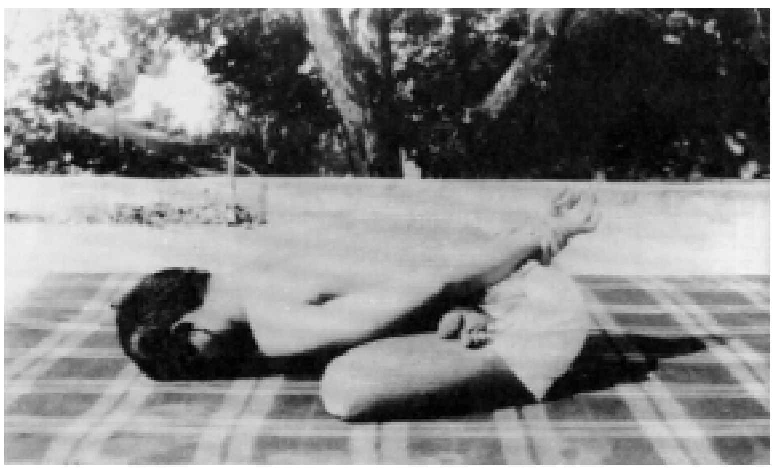
Now allow the centre of the abdomen free, by contracting the left and the right side of the abdomen. You will have all the muscles in the centre in a vertical line. Keep it so as long as you can do it comfortably. Do this much only for a few days.

After some practice, you should contract the right side of the abdomen and allow the left side free. Here you will have all the muscles on the left side only. Again, contract the left side and allow the right side free. By having such gradual practices, you will understand how to contract the muscles of the central, left and right sides of the abdomen.

Now comes the final stage of Nauli Kriya. Keep the muscles in the centre. Slowly bring them to the right side and then to the left side in a circular way. Do this several times from the right to the left and then do it in the reverse order, from the left to the right. You should always turn the muscles with a circular motion, slowly. You cannot derive the full benefits of this Kriya when you do not do it slowly and gradually. Beginners will feel a slight pain in the abdomen in the first two or three attempts. They need not fear. The pain will vanish after two or three days of regular practice.

Maha Mudra

Sit on the ground. Press the anus with the left heel. Stretch out the right leg. Take hold of the toe with the two hands. Inhale and retain the breath. Press the chin against the chest firmly. Fix the gaze at the Trikuti or the space between the eyebrows. Retain the posture as long as you tan. Practice on the other leg also.



Yoga Mudra

Sit on Padmasana. Place the palms on the heels. Exhale slowly and bend forward and touch the ground with your forehead. If you retain the pose for a long time, you can breathe in and out as usual. If you do it for a short time only, retain the breath till you raise the head and come back to your original position and then inhale. Instead of keeping the hands on the heels, you can take them to the back and catch hold of the left wrist with your right hand. This Mudra is useful in keeping up Brahmacharya. It reduces excessive fat in the belly and removes all disorders of the stomach and the bowels. Constipation is removed. The gastric fire is increased. Appetite and digestion improve. If you cannot retain the pose for a long time at one stretch, repeat the process several times. Take rest in the intervals.

Easy and comfortable Pranayama

Sit on Padmasana or Siddhasana with an empty light stomach in your meditation room. Close your eyes. Close the right nostril with the right thumb and draw in the air through the left nostril. Close the left nostril also with the right little and ring fingers and retain the air as long as you can. Then remove the right thumb and exhale very, very slowly. Again, in the same manner, draw in the air through the right nostril, retain it as long as you can; and then exhale through the left nostril. The whole process constitutes one Pranayama. Do twenty in the morning and twenty in the evening. Gradually and cautiously increase the period of retaining the air and the number of Pranayamas also. When you advance in the practice, you can have three or four sittings and you can do eighty Pranayamas in each sitting.

Bhastrika Pranayama

Sit on Padmasana. Keep the body erect. Close the mouth. Inhale and exhale quickly twenty times like the bellows. Constantly dilate and contract. The practitioner should start with expulsions of breath following one another in rapid succession. When the required number of expulsions, say, twenty for a round, is finished, the final expulsion is followed by the deepest possible inhalation. Retain the air as long as you can keep it comfortably and then very, very slowly, exhale. This is one round of Bhastrika. Take a little rest and then do another round. Do three rounds in the morning and three in the evening. This is a very powerful exercise, beneficial for Brahmacharins. You can do this even when you are standing.

Hints on Pranayama practice

Do not take bath immediately after Pranayama practice. Rest for half an hour. Have one sitting only in the morning during summer. If there is heat in the brain or head, apply cooling oil or butter before you take a bath.

Always inhale and exhale very slowly. Do not make any sound during inhalation. In Bhastrika, do not produce any violent sound. Breathe only through the nose. A neophyte should do Puraka and Rechaka only, without any Kumbhaka, for some days.

You must so nicely adjust the Puraka, Kumbhaka and Rechaka that you do not experience a feeling of suffocation or discomfort at any stage of Pranayama. You must not unnecessarily prolong the period of exhalation. If you prolong the time of Rechaka, the following inhalation will be done in a hurried manner and the rhythm will be broken.

Gradually increase the period of Kumbhaka. Do Kumbhaka for 4 seconds in the first week, for 8 seconds in the second week, for 12 seconds in the third week and so on till you are able to retain the breath as long as you can.

Repeat ‘Om’, Gayatri or any other Mantra mentally during the practice. Have the Bhav, feeling, that the Daivi-Sampat such as mercy, forgiveness, love and so on enter your system during inhalation and that all Asuric Sampat or devilish qualities such as lust, anger, greed and

jealousy are thrown out during exhalation. When you inhale, feel that you draw energy from the divine source, cosmic Prana, and that your whole body from top to toe is saturated with abundant, fresh energy. Stop the practice when you are seriously ailing.

Vajroli Mudra

This is an important Yogic Kriya in Hatha Yoga. You will have to work hard to get full success in this Kriya. There are very few people who are experts in this act. Yogic students draw water first through a silver tube, a specially made catheter, passed into the urethra twelve inches inside. After due practice they draw milk, then oil, honey and so on. They draw mercury in the end. Later on they can draw these liquids directly through the urethra without the help of the silver tube. This Kriya is of immense use for keeping up perfect Brahmacharya. On the first day you should send the catheter inside the urethra for one inch only, the second day for two inches, the third day for three inches, and so on. You must practice gradually till you are able to send twelve inches of the catheter inside. The way becomes clear and blowing. Raja Bhartrihari could do this Kriya very dexterously.

Even a drop of semen cannot come out of the Yogi who practices this Mudra. Even if it is discharged, he can draw it back through this Mudra. The Yogi, who draws his semen up and preserves it, conquers death. Good smell emanates from his body.

The late Trailingaswami of Benares was an expert in this Kriya. Sri Swami Kuvalayanandaji of Lonavala used to teach this Mudra.

Practice of Mula Bandha, Uddiyana Bandha, Maha Mudra, Asanas and Pranayamas will naturally enable one to understand Vajroli and to get success in its practice. This must be done under the direct guidance of a Guru.

The object of practising Vajroli Mudra is to be perfectly established in Brahmacharya. When aspirants practice this Mudra, they unconsciously divert their mind to sexual centres and thereby they fail to get any success. When you see the description of this Mudra, you will clearly understand that strict Brahmacharya is absolutely necessary. For practising this, there is no necessity at all for a woman or for any sexual intercourse. Since the Grihasthis have their wives and since they think that Vajroli Mudra is a device for birth control, they have a keen desire to practice this Mudra. It is all mere foolishness and delusion. They have not understood the technique and object of this important Kriya.

Your motive in learning the Vajroli Mudra must be pure. You must have the one idea of getting Self-realization through absolute Brahmacharya. Have sex sublimation. You must not misuse the power gained through this Yogic Kriya. Analyze and scrutinise your motive thoroughly. There are very many temptations and dangers on the Yogic road. Beware, my child Prem! I again and again warn you.

22. SOME ILLUSTRATIVE STORIES

1. The power of lust. The example of Jaimini

Once upon a time, Sri Vedavyasa was holding his Vedanta class amongst his students. In the course of his lecture, he mentioned that the young Brahmacharis should be very careful and should not mix with young ladies and that, with all their vigilance and circumspection, they might fall a victim as lust was very powerful. One of his students, Jaimini, the author of Purva-Mimamsa, was a little impertinent. He said, "Guruji Maharaj! Your statement is wrong. No lady can attract me. I am well established in Brahmacharya." Vyasa said, "Jaimini, you will know that soon. I am going to Benares. I will return within three months. Be careful. Don't be puffed up with pride."

Sri Vyasa, through his Yogic powers, assumed the form of a beautiful young girl, with piercing eyes and very charming face, well dressed in a thin silken garment. The lady was standing underneath a tree at sunset. Clouds gathered together. It began to rain. Accidentally, Jaimini was passing along the side of the tree. He saw the girl, felt pity and addressed her: "Oh lady, you can come and stay in my Ashram. I shall give you shelter." The lady asked, "Are you living alone? Is any woman living there?" Jaimini replied, "I am alone. But I am a perfect Brahmachari. No lust can affect me. I am free from any sort of Vikara. You can stay there." The lady objected: "It is not right for a young virgin girl to stay with a Brahmachari alone at night." Jaimini said, "Oh damsel, don't be afraid. I promise you of, my perfect Brahmacharya." Then she agreed and stayed in his Ashram at night.

Jaimini slept outside and the lady was sleeping inside the room. At dead of night, Jaimini began to feel the influence of lust in his mind. A little sexual craving arose in his mind. In the beginning, he was absolutely pure. He knocked at the door and said, "Oh lady, the wind is blowing outside. I cannot bear the cold blasts. I want to sleep inside." She opened the door. Jaimini was sleeping inside. Again the sexual craving became a little more intense and keen, as he was very close to a lady and as he heard the sound of her bangles. Then he rose up and began to embrace her. At once Sri Vyasa assumed his original form with his long beard and said, "Oh, my dear Jaimini, what about the strength of your Brahmacharya now? Are you established in your perfect celibacy now? What did you say when I was lecturing on this subject?" Jaimini dropped his head down in utter shame and said, "Guruji! I am wrong. Kindly pardon me."

This illustration goes to show that even great persons are duped by the power of Maya and by the influence of revolting Indriyas. Brahmacharins should be very careful.

2. Passion's hold over man's mind. Socrates and his disciple

One of the disciples of Socrates asked his teacher, "My venerable master, kindly instruct me how many times a householder can visit his legal wife." Socrates replied, "Only once in his lifetime."

The disciple said, “Oh my Lord! This is absolutely impossible for worldly men. Passion is dreadful and troublesome. This world is full of temptations and distractions. Householders have not a strong will to resist temptations. Their Indriyas are very revolting and powerful. The mind is filled with passion. Thou art a philosopher and Yogi. You can control. Pray, kindly prescribe an easy path for the men of the world.” Then Socrates said, “ A householder can have copulation once in a year.”

The disciple replied, “O venerable sir, this is also a hard job for them. You must prescribe an easier course.” Socrates then replied, “Well, my dear disciple, once in a month. This is suitable. This is quite easy. I think you are satisfied now.”

The disciple said, “This also is impossible, my revered master. Householders are very fickle-minded. Their minds are full of sexual Samskaras and Vasanas. They cannot remain even for a single day without sexual intercourse. You have no idea of their mentality.”

Then Socrates said, “Well said, my dear child. Do one thing now. Go directly to the burial ground now. Dig a grave and purchase a coffin and winding sheet for the corpse before hand. Now you can spoil yourself any number of times you like. This is my final advice to you.” This last advice pierced the heart of the disciple. He felt it keenly. He thought over the matter seriously and understood the importance and glory of Brahmacharya. He took to spiritual Sadhana in right earnest. He took a vow of strict unbroken celibacy for life. He became an Oordhvareta Yogi and had Self-realization. He became one of the favourite disciples of Socrates.

3. Lust increases with enjoyment. Raja Yayati

There once lived a sagely king named Yayati who lived for a full one thousand years enjoying all the pleasures a king of his position could command. When old age attacked him, and he had still a great desire to enjoy all royal pleasures for some more years, he asked each of his sons, one by one, to take upon himself this old age and give him his youth in return, assuring that after another one thousand years he would return the youth and take back his decrepitude. Not one of them was willing to accept the offer except his youngest son named Puru.

Puru said with all humility that he was quite willing to do as his father wished him and accordingly gave his youth to his father and got in return old age and its consequent weakness. Yayati, being exceedingly delighted with his new youth, began again to indulge in sensual pleasures. He enjoyed himself to the full extent of his desires and to the full limit of his powers and as much as he desired without violating the precepts of religion. He was very happy, but only one thought troubled him. And that was the thought that the one thousand years would soon come to an end.

When the fixed time came to an end, he came to his son Puru and addressed him thus: “O son, I have enjoyed with your youth to the full extent of my desires and to the full limit of my powers and all according to their seasons. But, desires never die. They are never satiated by indulgence. By indulgence they flame up like the sacrificial fire with ghee poured into it. If one

becomes the sole lord of all the earth with its paddy, oats, gems, beasts and women, still it will not be considered by him enough. Therefore, the thirst for enjoyment should be abandoned. The thirst for enjoyments which is difficult to cast off by the wicked, which does not fail even with failing life, is truly a fatal disease in man. To get rid of this thirst is real happiness. My mind was attached to the pleasures of life for full one thousand years. My thirst for them, however, without being abated, is daily being increased. Therefore, I shall get rid of it. I shall fix my mind on Brahman, and becoming peaceful and having no attachment, I shall pass the rest of my days in the forest with the innocent deer." So saying he installed Puru on the throne after giving him back his youth and retired into the forest to lead the life of an ascetic.

4. Dawn of Viveka and Vairagya. Yogi Vemana

Vemana was born in the year 1820 in a small village in the district of Godavari in Andhra Desa. He had a brother by name Anu Verna Reddy. His parents passed away when he was quite a young boy. He was born in a rich family. He was a Reddy by caste.

Vemana was sent to a primary school. He was not able to prosecute his studies. He fell into evil company and became a rowdy boy. But he was very handsome and active. Anu Verna Reddy and his wife Narasamma liked Vemana very much. At the age of fifteen, Vemana became debaucherous. He spent much money for the sake of women. Yet, his brother and sister-in-law liked him very much.

Anu Vema Reddy and his wife wanted to correct the ways of Vemana. They stopped giving him any money. So Vemana stole at night the ornaments of his sister-in-law and gave them to a prostitute. When his sister-in-law came to know of the loss of the jewels, she asked Vemana, "Where are my jewels?" Vemana answered, "As you did not give me money, I took them and gave away to my beloved." Narasamma did not speak a word. She did not even inform her husband of the loss of the jewels. She liked Vemana very much. She locked up all her ornaments in the safe.

The prostitute urged Vemana to bring some More money or ornaments. So, again at dead of night, Vemana woke up from his bed and tried to remove some of the ornaments from the neck of his sister-in-law. She was wearing only the sacred Mangala Sutra that was tied round her neck at the time of her marriage; she had kept all her other jewels in the safe. Vemana wanted to remove at least this ornament. When he was attempting to remove it, Narasamma woke up and caught hold of his hand and asked him why he came to her bedroom at midnight. He replied in a daring manner: "My beloved asked me to bring some ornaments. I came here to take them." Narasamma asked him to get out of the room at once. Then Vemana cried and fell at her feet. Narasamma prayed to God to give good Buddhi to Vemana and make him a pure, virtuous soul. Then she promised to give Vemana an ornament, provided he would strictly obey her words. Vemana fully assured her.

Narasamma said: "Vemana! Ask the girl to stand naked in front of you. Let her back be turned towards you. Then ask her to bend down and take the jewel from your hands by passing

her hands through her thighs." Vemana promised to do so and took an oath also in the name of Goddess Kali. Then his sister-in-law gave him a valuable ornament.

Vemana proceeded directly to the prostitute's house and asked her to do in the manner his sister-in-law had instructed. While the prostitute was bending down, he saw very clearly the private parts of the woman. At once intense Vairagya dawned in his mind. He retraced his steps to his house with the ornament in his hands. He gave back the ornament to his sister-in-law and related to her all that had happened. He said, "My dear sister-in-law! Thank you so much for all your kind acts. I am a changed man now. There is no real happiness in this world. It is all jugglery of Maya. I am going now in quest of real happiness." He left the house at once and went to a Kali temple near his village and sat near the image of Kali.

Now it so happened that, for some years, a man named Abhiramayya had been praying to Kali for Her Darshan. One day She appeared in his dream and said, "Come tomorrow at midnight. I will give you Darshan." But the unfortunate devotee could not come the next day. When Kali came, Vemana was there instead. Kali asked Vemana to seek a boon of her. Vemana said, "O Mother! Give me Brahma-Jnana." Mother Kali then initiated him into the mysteries of Jnana. From that day onwards, Vemana became a virtuous man with great devotion, Yogic powers and Jnana.

In course of his wanderings, Vemana went to Cuddapah. He lived in a forest near Cuddapah. He planted various fruit-bearing trees like melons and cucumbers. The cucumbers were all filled with gold. With this gold, Vemana built a temple at Sri Sailam. Even today, this temple at Sri Sailam contains the famous Jyotirlingam of Mallikarjuna. It is a famous place of pilgrimage. One day some thieves came to rob the cucumbers containing gold. They all became senseless due to the Yogic powers of Vemana.

Once Vemana entered the cottage of a poor Brahmin at midnight and went to sleep on his bed. During the night, he answered the calls of nature on the bed itself. That portion of the bed, which was soiled by his excreta, became transmuted into gold.

Vemana cast off his physical sheath in 1865 in Katarupalli in the Cuddapah district. He wrote several books in Telugu on Yoga, chief among them being "Vemana Tattva-Jnanam" and "Vemana Jivamritam".

5. Beauty lies in imagination. The story of Hemachuda

There was a king named Muktachuda in olden times. He ruled the kingdom of Dasarna. He had two sons, Hemachuda and Manichuda. They both were very handsome and virtuous. They had good behaviour and conduct. They were also very proficient in all the arts. They both went to the mountain Sahya with attendants and weapons for hunting. They shot many tigers and wild animals. All of a sudden there was a terrible sandstorm. Immense darkness prevailed. One could not see the other person.

Hemachuda somehow managed to reach the hermitage of a sage, which was full of fruit trees. He saw in the Ashram a beautiful maiden. He was quite astonished to see a fearless girl in that solitary forest. He asked the maiden, "Who are you? Who is your father? Why are you alone here? How did you develop this courage?" She replied politely, "Welcome, O prince! Take your seat. Take a little rest. You seem to be much tired. Kindly take these fruits and nuts. I shall relate my story." The prince ate those fruits and nuts and rested for a while.

The girl then began: "O prince! Harken to my story with rapt attention. I am the God-child of sage Vyaghrapada who is adored by all, who has conquered the world by his severe austerities, and who has attained liberation. My name is Hemalekha. Vidyutprabha, celestial nymph of matchless beauty and indescribable splendour, one day came to the river Veena for bathing. Sushena, the king of the Vengas, also came there. Sushena was captivated by the enchanting beauty of Vidyutprabha. The celestial nymph was also infatuated with the handsome figure of King Sushena. Sushena pleaded his love to Vidyutprabha. She responded. The king spent some time with her. Afterwards he returned to his capital.

"Vidyutprabha soon brought forth a child." She left the child there as she was afraid of her husband and went to her place. I am that child. Vyaghrapada came to the river for his daily ablutions. He saw me and took pity on me. He brought me up like a mother. I regard him as my father. I serve him with reverence. Through his grace I have become fearless here. My father will return presently. Please wait a little. Pay your respects to him and obtain his blessings." The intelligent girl understood the heart of the prince and said: "O prince! Do not get disheartened. You can gratify your desire. My father will grant your desire."

Immediately, the sage Vyaghrapada entered with flowers for worship. The prince got up and prostrated before the sage. The sage understood that the prince was in love with the girl. He gave Hemalekha in marriage to the prince. The prince returned with her to his city. His father was very much delighted. He celebrated their marriage with pomp and splendour.

The prince loved Hemalekha immensely. He was very much attached to her. But he noticed that she was rather indifferent to sensual pleasures. He asked her one day: "O dear Hemalekha, what is the matter with you? I am very much attached to you. Why do you not reciprocate my love? Nothing seems to have any effect on you. You are dispassionate. How can I enjoy when you have such an attitude of mind? You always sit with closed eyes like a statue. You do not laugh, play and joke with me. Kindly speak out your heart. Be frank."

Hemalekha replied respectfully: "O prince! Hear me. What is love? What is dislike? As this is not clear to my mind, I am always reflecting over it. I have come to no definite conclusion. Please enlighten me on this point. I entreat you."

Hemachuda replied with a smile: "It is true that women possess an innocent mind. Even animals understand what is like and dislike. We see that they like pleasing things and dislike unpleasant objects. Beauty gives us pleasure; ugliness gives us pain. Why do you waste your time daily on this?"

Hemalekha replied: “It is true I that women have no independent power of thinking. So, is it not your duty to clear my doubts? If you throw light, I will leave off thinking and be attached to you always. O prince! You said that like and dislike or love and hatred arise out of objects which give us pleasure and pain. But the same object gives us pleasure and pain on account of time, circumstances and environments. What is your decision then? Kindly give me your definite answer. Fire is very pleasant in winter, but in summer it is very terrible. You cannot go near the fire. The same fire gives pleasure in cold countries and pain in hot countries. The quantity of fire gives us different results. Similar is the case with wealth, wife, son, mother and so on. These induce positive sufferings and misery. Why is it that your father Muktachuda, despite his possession of immense wealth, sons and wife is always sorrowful? Others are very happy even without these. Worldly happiness is mixed with misery, pain, fear and anxiety. So it cannot be called happiness at all. Misery is personal and impersonal or internal and external. The external one is caused by the faults of the elements on the body. The internal one is born out of desire. It has connection with the mind. Of these, the internal one is more formidable. It is the seed or cause for all suffering. The whole world is drowned in such internal misery. The tree called misery has desire as the strong and never-failing seed. Even Indra and other gods are impelled by this desire. They carry out its instructions day and night. If there is no desire, you cannot experience any pleasure. Such a mixture of happiness and misery is enjoyed even by the insects, worms and dogs. Do you think that man’s happiness is greater than this? The happiness of the insects is superior to that of man. Because desire is not mixed in their pleasure, it is unalloyed. Whereas, in man, a little pleasure is found in the midst of thousands of ungratified desires. This cannot be called happiness. Man feels happy by embracing his wife, but by pressing her limbs too much, he makes her feel uneasy. After sporting, they are exhausted. What happiness have you in these sensual perishable objects? Kindly explain, O prince! This sort of happiness is enjoyed even by dogs, donkeys and pigs. But, if you say that you are happy by looking at my physical beauty, this happiness is imaginary and illusory like embracing a lady in a dream.

“A certain beautiful prince had a very handsome wife. He was very much attached to her. She, on the contrary, was in love with the prince’s servant. She was cheating the prince by foul means. The servant would mix some intoxicating drug in the wine given to the prince. Then he would send an ugly servant-maid to the prince. He himself would sport with the prince’s wife. The prince, under intoxication, was thinking: ‘I am very fortunate. I have got the most beautiful lady in the world.’ Many days passed thus. One day the servant forgot to mix the narcotic in the wine. The prince also did not drink much that day. He joined the ugly woman when he fell a victim to passion. He now found out that she was the servant-maid. He asked her where his dear wife was. She kept silent at first. Then the prince drew the sword and threatened to kill her if she did not reveal the whole truth. She told him everything and showed the place where his beautiful wife was with the servant. The prince said: ‘What a fool am I! I have degraded myself by drinking. Whoever places too much love on a woman becomes despicable. Just as a bird is not fixed to any particular tree, so also, woman is not fixed to one man. She has fickle, unsteady mind. I have become a beast. I have lost my power of discrimination. I regarded my wife as more valuable than my very life itself. A man who is attached to a woman and who yields to a woman is a veritable donkey indeed. Woman is evanescent like the autumnal sky. I did not know woman’s nature till now. She goes to the dirty servant and she has left me who am ever

attached to her and who is faithful to her. She pretended to show love to me like a drama actress. I am cheated. The servant is ugly in all his limbs. What beauty does she find in him?' The prince became disgusted with everything. He left the kingdom and went to a forest."

Hemalekha continued: "Therefore, O prince! Beauty is a mental creation only. Beauty is mind-born. Beauty is the result of mental conception. Just as you behold beauty in me, others find even better charm in ugly women. On seeing a woman, her reflection is formed in the mirror of a man's mind. If a man thinks of this beauty constantly, desire is stimulated in that part of the body, which is subject to impulse. That man in whom the desire is thus stimulated enjoys sensual pleasure, whereas, he whose desire is not stimulated does not care to see even the most handsome girl. The cause for this is the constant meditation on beauty or woman. Boys and ascetics do not meditate or think on this. Therefore, they do not get any desire for sensual pleasures. Those who find pleasure in the company of a particular woman create in their minds the beauty according to their ideas, irrespective of whether the woman is ugly or most beautiful. They project their ideas of beauty in the woman. If you ask how beauty is found in an ugly woman and how there can be joy without beauty, I can only say that a passionate man in his infatuation is blind. Cupid is painted blind. The passionate man finds the beauty of Rambha in the most ugly woman. There can be no beauty without desire. If beauty be natural like sourness, sweetness and bitterness in substances, then why is it not found in children and young girls? Therefore, beauty is created by mind only.

"People think as beautiful this physical body which is composed of flesh, filled with blood, built of nerves, covered with skin, a cage of bones overgrown with hair, full of bile and phlegm, a box of excreta and urine, created out of blood and semen, born through the urinary passage! How can those persons who find pleasure in this be superior to worms born in filth? O prince, you find my physical body to be beautiful. Just analyze this body part by part and think over each part. Think over every part of sweet and delicious things. All things we eat are changed into abominable dirt. When such is the case, what is lovable and delighting?"

Hemachuda heard the nectar-like instructions of Hemalekha with great attention and interest. He developed strong Vairagya and Viveka, meditated on the all-pervading, pure, immortal Atman and became a Jivanmukta. Manichuda also learnt the truth from his brother; Muktachuda from his son; and his wife from her daughter-in-law. The minister and citizens of that town became wise. Even birds were uttering and others words of wisdom in that town. Sages Vamadeva and others noticed that all in that town, including the animals and birds, were learned and wise and called the city as Vidyanagar or the Town of Wisdom.

6. Physical beauty is no beauty. Story of a prince

Once a young prince saw a beautiful princess on the banks of a river when he was on a hunting excursion. The princess had a philosophical bent of mind. She had mastered several Vedantic books. She was practising deep meditation on Atman. The prince approached her and wanted her to marry him. She flatly refused. The prince again and again entreated her in various ways. She finally told him, "Please come and see me in my residence after ten days. I shall marry you". The prince also was a student of Vedanta, but he had no real sustained Vairagya.

He spent sleepless nights, and on the morning of the tenth day, eagerly proceeded to the palace of the princess.

The young princess had already devised a means to escape from the clutches of marriage. She took a drastic purgative of croton oil continually for ten days and collected all the motions in ten separate enamel commodes and arranged them all nicely with numbers 1 to 10 in a big room, covering all the commodes with beautiful silk clothes. She now looked all skin and bones. Her eyes were sunken and she lay down on her bed.

The prince came to meet her with great joy. The maid-servant conducted him to the room where the princess lay. The prince could not recognise her. He asked the maid-servant, "Where is the young, beautiful lady? She is not the lady whom I met the other day!" To which the princess replied, "O dear prince, I am the very same lady. I have carefully stored up my beauty in the yonder room. Kindly go with me and see the accumulated beauty there. Come along with me now. I shall show it to you". So saying, she took the prince to the room, removed the silk pieces, and asked him to look at her beauty. She added, "This is the beauty of my skin and flesh". The prince was simply stunned. He did not speak a word to the lady. He prostrated at her feet and took her as his mother. He threw off his princely robes and retired into the forests. Now his heart was filled with intense Vairagya. He sought the protection of a sage, got instructions from him, practiced rigorous meditation and attained Knowledge of the Self.

7. Being busy is the best way to control lust. Story of a ghost

The mind is like the ghost, which is always restless. Once a Brahmin Pundit, through Mantra Siddhi, had control over a ghost. The ghost said to the Pundit, "I can do any work for you in a minute. I have supernatural powers. You must be giving me various kinds of works .... always. If you leave me even for a second without work, I will at once devour you". The Brahmin agreed.

The ghost dug a tank for the Brahmin, ploughed the fields and did various works in a short time. The Brahmin was not able to engage the ghost in any further work. The ghost threatened him, "Now there is no work for me. I will devour you". The Brahmin was much puzzled. He did not know what to do. He went to his Guru and explained his situation. His teacher said, "Use your common sense. Install a big, stout, soft, wooden post in front of your house. Apply castor oil, wax and other greasy substances to the post. Ask the ghost to get up the post and get down the whole day and night". The disciple acted accordingly and controlled the ghost without any difficulty. The ghost became helpless.

Even so, you must give to the mind some kind of work or the other always: Japa, meditation, Svadhyaya, service, Kirtan, prayer and so on. You must keep it fully occupied. Then only the mind can be easily controlled. You will have no evil thoughts. You can be well established both in physical and mental Brahmacharya.

SELECT SAYINGS ON SEX AND CELIBACY

Brahmacharya is abstaining from all kinds of Maithuna or sexual enjoyment for ever, in all places and in all conditions, physically, mentally and verbally. **- Yajnavalkya**

Thinking of a woman or her picture, praising a woman or her picture, sporting with a woman or her picture, glancing at a woman or her picture, secretly talking to a woman, thinking of a sinful action towards a woman actuated by sensuality, determining upon the sinful action, and bodily action resulting in the discharge of semen are the eight characteristics of copulation; and Brahmacharya is quite contrary to all these eight indications. **- Daksha Smriti**

Know that in this world there is nothing that cannot be attained by one who remains from birth to death a perfect celibate... In one person, knowledge of the four Vedas, and in another, perfect celibacy - of these, the latter is superior to the former who is wanting in celibacy.

- The Mahabharata

Brahmacharya or spotless chastity is the best of all penances; a celibate of such spotless chastity is not a human being, but a god indeed... To the celibate who conserves the semen with great efforts, what is there unattainable in this world? By the power of the composure of the semen, one will become just like myself. **- Lord Sankara**

And those students who find that world of God through chastity, theirs is that heavenly country; theirs, in whatever world they are, is freedom. **- Chhandogya Upanishad**

A wise man should avoid married life as if it were a burning pit of live coals. From the contact comes sensation, from sensation thirst, from thirst clinging; by ceasing from that, the soul is delivered from all sinful existence. **- Lord Buddha**

These sexual propensities, though they are at first like ripples, acquire the proportions of a sea on account of bad company. **- Narada**

Sensuality destroys life, lustre, strength, vitality, memory, wealth, great fame, holiness and devotion to the Supreme. **- Lord Krishna**

Death is hastened by letting out semen from the body; life is saved and prolonged by preserving it.

There is no doubt that people die prematurely by letting the semen out of the body; knowing this, the Yogi should always preserve semen and lead a life of strict celibacy.

- Siva Samhita

Caution in diet is of threefold value, but abstinence from sexual intercourse is of fourfold value. The Sannyasi had, and has a rule never to look at a woman. **- Atreya**

Let not a Brahmin see a woman naked. **- Manu**

SECTION IV. A SYMPOSIUM

COMMENTARY ON SWAMI SIVANANDA'S 8TH SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTION

By Swami Chidananda

8. Brahmacharya: Preserve the vital force (Veerya) very, very carefully. Veerya is God in motion or manifestation—Vibhuti. Veerya is all power. Veerya is all money. Veerya is the essence of life, thought and intelligence.

Brahmacharya, which is the third of the five niyamas of Maharshi Patanjali, gets mentioned in practically every one of the scriptures of Sanatana Vaidic Dharma (Eternal Religion)—the Bhagavata, the Ramayana and all the Puranas. It is also in all the Yogas-Bhakti Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Raja Yoga.

In the Hindu tradition three great principles or qualities have been laid down as fundamental practices for spiritual development. They are ahimsa, satyam and brahmacharya (non-injury, truthfulness and chastity).

Yadi moksham icchasi chetthaatha
Vishayan vishavat thyaja
Brahmacharyam ahimsa cha
Satyam peeyusha-vad-bhaja

"If you desire your highest blessedness, give up like poison desire for sensual enjoyment and pleasures and like nectar receive into your life the triple virtues of chastity, non-injury and truthfulness."

Down the ages this has come to be the cardinal doctrine of the Higher Life.

Within the context of the Christian faith, the prophetic religion that formed itself around the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, faith, hope and charity are lauded as cardinal virtues. Within the context of this religion, there is also Sannyas (order of renunciation)—the Christian monastic tradition. In this monastic tradition, three great vows are indispensable, they are poverty, chastity and obedience. That is the monastic vow. That is the vow of the monks and priests in seminaries as also the vow of the nuns in convents.

This also existed in pre-Christian Roman times when for the mystical Oracle of Delphi, it was only virgins who were qualified to perform the high task of divining the will of God and guiding man. This they proclaimed in a state of spiritual trance. These unmarried maidens were dedicated to God and this task, and it was believed that it was only in the pure minds and hearts of these virgins that God revealed His sacred Will. They were called Vestil Virgins of Delphi. So, the tradition of brahmacharya—chastity, self-control, sex purity did not commence from Christianity, it must have already been there within the tradition of Judaism as well.

Long before that, during the time of Buddha—who preceded Jesus by more than 500 years—the doctrine of chastity was a necessary preparation and foundation for the life of renunciation, asceticism and Yoga for the seeker after the Great Reality or for attainment of Enlightenment and Wisdom. This foundation was recognized by Buddha. The Young prince living in a palace with his young wife and baby—Rahul, left everything and went into the forest. That great renunciation, great tyaga was wonderfully brought out by Sir Edwin Arnold in his Light of Asia, a poetical presentation of Buddha's great life, career and attainment.

Thus, it is something that has been handed down to humanity from time immemorial. It is a part of the global heritage from various diverse directions and sources. Far back, even before Zoroaster or Buddha, the ancient prophets of the Upanishads proclaimed the same thing. We hear mentioned in the Vedic age of Indra and Virochana approaching Brahma for instructions, and Brahma sending them back to observe brahmacharya for so many years—"Then come and ask me, I shall give you some knowledge, part of my knowledge." So they go and observe the vow of celibacy for so many years and come back. Then He gives them a part of the Truth. After that He says—"Now go back and observe celibacy for some more years and come back." Because, it is necessary to grasp the concept of That which is beyond the grasp of the mind and the senses, beyond speech and thought. They were unable to grasp it. A gross mind which is identified with the body, with the senses and with the sense appetites, and which is enslaved by the pleasure principle only, is unfit to think of abstract and abstruse ideas and concepts. A mind that has become gross due to the progressive increase of rajas and tamas, becomes unfit and naturally spiritual life and practices are a far cry to that individual. Mind must become attenuated, it must become very fine. There should be no grossness—desires, attachments and cravings in it. A certain psychic fineness of the antahkarana (inner being) is said to be essential and indispensable for rising higher into sublime ideas, thoughts and processes of viveka (discrimination), vichara (enquiry) and atma sadhana (enquiry into the Self). Therefore, this process of purification, the rising from the gross to the subtle, is the essence of the concept of brahmacharya.

The sage, Rishya Sringa, was established in brahmacharya. When a whole kingdom was threatened by famine, due to a drought, the king was deeply concerned, people were in great fear and anxiety. Then some sages advised that if this great man, who was established in the vow of absolute celibacy and continence, could be brought to the kingdom, into the royal city, then the heavens would bless them with rain. So they induced him to come. Thus the famine and possible death due to starvation of countless people was averted.

Long, long ago, our Puranic scripture, Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana has given the highest place for a great lady who was a paragon of virtue and chastity and total fidelity to her husband. Never did a thought of any other man cross her mind even in dream or imagination. So much so that the three great cosmic deities, the Creator, the Preserver and the Dissolver—Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesvara had to admit her greatness and confess that they had failed in trying to shake her from her firm adherence to chastity when they tried to test her—she was given a crucial test, maybe to glorify this great quality of chastity. She became immortal—Sati Anasuya, the mother of the Trimurtis incarnated as one avatara—Sri Dattatreya, who is regarded as the Adi-Guru.

Even so, the great world mother, Jagan-Mata Sita Janaki—the queen and wife of Lord Rama—became immortal as an example of the great virtue of pativrata (faithful wife). And therefore the couple, Maryada Purushottam Bhagavan Sri Ramachandra and Jagan Mata Sita Janaki are regarded as the ideal for the second ashrama—the grihastashrama, forever and for all times to come, for all those that believe in the Vedas and the Vedic way of life.

For 14 years Laxmana observed the vow of perfect celibacy and therefore it was he alone who was able to ultimately give victory to the side of Rama by destroying Indrajit (Meghanada) the invincible and invulnerable son of Ravana.

In the cultural history of India, the name of Bhishma evokes awe, wonder and admiration in the hearts of each and every individual who has heard about him and the great vow he took in order to fulfil the desire of his father. It has gone down in history as Bhishma Pratigna. He became a lifelong Brahmachari, and was one of the most invincible of warriors in the whole narrative of the Mahabharata. Just as the determination, the resolution, and the austerity performed by Bhagirath, another scion of the royal race and royal family, has gone down in history as something unprecedented, unparalleled, unique. We speak of Bhagiratha prayatna!

Now, we cannot simply brush aside all these facts as so mush foolishness or so much meaningless. These were not normal people, they were supernormal extraordinary personalities who had acquired Supreme Wisdom, great intuition and attained towering heights of Self-realization. Sages like Vyasa and Valmiki, were not infantile, irrational idealists—they were Tattva-vettas, Brahma-jnanis and therefore we would only be demonstrating our emptiness, our bankruptcy in vichara and viveka if we question the rationality of the principles and teachings of these great ones.

So it seems to be important that not only in the context of Satya Sanatana Vaidic Dharma but in the context of all the great living religions of the world today there is something deeply scientific and meaningful and of great importance in the observance of these principles. And you will find that Zoroaster, Socrates, Jesus, Buddha, they might not have propagated any Yoga path or Sadhana system, but they gave forth great teachings for attaining Blessedness by fulfilling the highest purpose of human existence namely love of God.

All these are indications of the concept of conserving a certain dynamic force in the human biological being and converting and sublimating this force upon which your existence, my existence—the existence of all of us physically, has been dependent. I am here, Chidananda, sitting and talking to you through the Grace of Gurudev. This has been possible because my parents produced for me this physical vehicle into which I could come at the time of prarabdha (pre-fixed birth). Even so, because the parents of Buddha, Raja Shuddhodana and mother Yasodhara had prepared the wondrous body for the Tathagata, we have the inspiring teachings of this great Master who built up a large following, a great religion, philosophy, and meditational system.

And it is therefore this concept of conserving a dynamic biological force within the human system and converting it into a higher subtler force through sublimation, conservation, preservation and taking it higher into the psyche in the form of a very, very refined subtle energy, psychical energy called ojas—ojas means that which is radiant, that which shines, that which is effulgent. This wise technique, a scientific method of converting the gross into the subtle; physical into the spiritual; psychic into the spiritual was evolved by the great sages.

Perpetuation of the Species

Because provision was made by the Cosmic Intelligence Power that we call para-Brahman and the Cosmic Force that we call Para-shakti, Adi-shakti, Maha-shakti, it has been possible that different species of living creatures, different species of plant life, botanical life, has lived, developed and evolved through the ages. This perpetuation of the species is the law of life in the entire universe, in every form of life, not only human, animal or sub-animal—insect, reptile, fish—but even in the botanical world. How there is cross pollination and how the flower is the means of carrying out this act of reproduction, it is an intricate, mysterious marvel! Those who study it will be amazed at the wonderful science behind it, will marvel at this unknown mysterious Cosmic Intelligence that has brought this process about. One is struck with awe and admiration when one begins to go deeper into the process of how life is perpetuated on every level, every plane and every field of life, even from the most rudimentary life of a single cell, how it splits, divides itself and multiplies.

How wonderful that a seed is able to germinate due to the presence of two factors, so that the power of these factors gives it that mighty force of even breaking through rock, breaking through the pressure of heavy soil over it—a tiny, tender little thing like a seed that has just germinated. What a miracle! What great force! It cleaves the earth ten times harder than its tender shoot, and surfaces. If by chance a seed has been deposited on the top of a concrete terrace, when it germinates it even breaks through bricks and cement walls and displaces them and puts forth its own life.

This act of multiplying and reproducing is present everywhere. It saturates and permeates the whole universe because from the angle of cosmology, the entire universe is the outcome of such a primal first wish for multiplication. “I am One, may I become many.” Thus the Vedas say that there was one imponderable, mysterious Being. What that Being was, who knows, because that Being was one without a second. So, a second not being present, not existing how can there arise the question of anyone cognizing that Being? Who was there to cognize when that-Ekameva ’dvitiyam Brahma (God) alone existed. And in that mysterious Being there arose this germ of an idea. He thought: “May I become many. I am One, may I become many.” That is how they try to explain the genesis of the advitiya and the aneka from the Ekameva ’dvitiya. And, therefore, the concept of multiplication is at the very heart and essence of existence because it arose from Brahma and therefore it is present everywhere. In the Bible it is put in a different way. God created man and told him: “Go forth and multiply.” And, if you delve into the scriptures of all religions, you will find that somewhere or the other this fact is there.

Therefore, the great Cosmic Intelligence and Power called God or Paramatman, the Supreme Soul or the Universal Spirit, permeates and indwells everything that exists. And thus when there is a provision made in a certain period of life then it takes on the nature of a very, very sacred act. Because, ultimately the atman is not created, what is created by the parents, human or sub-human, is only a vehicle for the entry into the earth plane of a spirit, a nucleus of consciousness. And the creation of this receptacle is an act wherein the partners in a marital state co-operate with Brahma, the creator—Srishtikarta Brahma. So they take on a certain part of Brahma's function. Therefore it is sacred.

Power of Brahmacharya

It is this force of brahmacharya that is the invaluable force that gives success in sravana (hearing), manana (reflection) and nididhyasana (concentration). It gives success in the practice of the nine modes of Bhakti—Sravana, kirtana, smarana, archana, vandana, pada-sevana, dasya, sakhya, and atma-nivedana. It makes possible the successful practice of Raja Yoga—yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana and samadhi. It makes for a fruitful practice of asana, pranayama, mudra, bandha, kriya leading into samadhi of the Hatha Yoga system. It is this force that brought forth Ravindranath Tagore, Bhagat Singh, Mahatma Gandhi, Beethoven, Bach, Albert Schweitzer, Joan of Arc and Mother Theresa. It is this marvellous force that brought forth sage Valmiki and all the other great towering figures in history. Their miracle was because of this secret of conservation, preservation, sublimation and sublime application towards a higher purpose.

The profligate who wastes his vital power and becomes a nervous wreck falls prey to various diseases. He is like the foolish multi-millionaire's son who throws away his money in drinking, gambling and other extravagances, purchasing a dozen cadilacs, houses and land in Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Isles of Capri and Monte Carlo and then afterwards becoming bankrupt and reduced to a beggar, why? Whatever was given to him was squandered. It was lost. Not knowing its value, he became reduced to abject poverty. What a deplorable, pitiable state!

Energy and strength are necessary for all processes and all activities. The higher the activity, the greater the need of energy. Diesel can drive certain vehicles. Petrol can only drive certain vehicles. Neither diesel nor petrol can make an aeroplane fly, they have to have high octane fuel for making aeroplanes fly. Therefore, crude energy is enough for physical functions. A more subtle type of energy is necessary for intellectual functions—going to the university and studying for a law, science or nuclear science degree. An altogether different type of highly refined, extremely subtle force is necessary for the process that takes you across the barrier of the relative and launches you into the Absolute. Dhyanavastha—it is that subtlest of the subtle, most refined process that brings you face to face with the Supreme Reality—God-realization. It is the stage of Yoga next to Super-consciousness or samadhi, where Purusha (Spirit) attains awareness of His own ever-free, independent, all-perfect nature distinct from prakriti (matter). And therefore, it is only one step next to the threshold of Super-consciousness, Self-realization, Aparoksha Anubhuti. For that process, you can just imagine how subtle and how refined the mind has to be. And so the gross potential has to be first of all refined. It is like mining ore from

the bowels of the earth. The ore contains gold, but it is not gold. It has to be refined and sifted until pure gold is brought out. So the biological sex-force has to be transmuted into a subtle psychic spiritual force called ojas.

Duties of Householders

All this talk about brahmacharya must not give us the impression that in Hinduism and in the Hindu religion, sex has no place and celibacy is the only thing that is insisted upon and lauded as the highest virtue. That would be a mistake, a misconception. In the Varnashrama Dharma, pattern of life formulated and given for the individual born into the Hindu faith (Vaidica Dharma), brahmacharya is insisted upon as total abstinence from sex life, from any form of physical and mental manifestation of sex life, for three of the four ashramas. But in the Grihasthashrama (householders' life) the exercise of sex life is regarded as sacred, and elaborate rules and regulations have been drawn up for it. A great deal of advice, guidance and instructions have been given for the second ashrama, where it becomes not only a right and permitted but is elevated to the sacred duty of the householder. It has been given as the most important duty to perpetuate the particular family lineage, and it is considered a sacred duty to contribute one's mite towards the generation of tomorrow. So, it has been recognized as an important function of the human individual, and this lifelong partnership is regarded as one of the most sacred aspects of human life. Here it has been carried to the level of the yajna (sacrifice). In the samskaras (four stages of life) this particular aspect of yajna is there in order to support life. Just as the eating function of the individual has been taken to the level of a yajna, saying it is ahuti, not an offering to an outer fire in a yajna kund but a daily sacred offering to agni (the inner gastric fire)—to that agni each morsel of food is offered as ahuti; so this is a sacred yajna—the offering of the ahuti of the life principle into the partner in order to perpetuate the family lineage.

But then it is made legitimate, permissible, a duty. If you do not perform that duty, dire consequences are foretold by the scriptures—that if you do not have a progeny, and there also if you do not have a male progeny, the parents will go to hell, a special hell reserved for them. And, therefore, Sanatana Vaidica Dharma has even permitted that if a Brahmin has not a putra santana (male child) he may take another wife. He can even take four wives. Where the male offspring is very important to a royal household, a king can marry several wives. So Hinduism is not anti-sex or a negation of the human nature and human function. On the contrary where it is necessary it is regarded as the highest duty.

Brahmacharya in Modern Society

Brahmacharya is that way of living your life, that way of conduct and behaviour that will ultimately and gradually lead you towards Brahma jnana—grant you Brahma jnana. In a specific way, it has come to mean purity in sex life. But, this is an insufficient meaning. Mahatma Gandhi said that no attempt to keep oneself under control and in mastery only from the point of view of one's carnal passions or physical appetites will ever be successful unless simultaneously one tries to keep all one's senses under control. Absolute establishment in brahmacharya, absolute sex purity is possible only if one is a self-controlled person in a completely integral

sense of the term. You must have your ears under control. You must have your eyes under control. You must have your hands and feet under control. You must have your tongue also under control. Then there is some possibility of being established in sex purity. And Gurudev's concept of brahmacharya is not only limited to the physical restraint of the body and its passions but includes mental brahmacharya as well. He said: "You must be established in perfect brahmacharya, physically as well as mentally so that even in dream, any gross or carnal thought should not arise in your mind."

How is it that so much importance is given to the sex function in modern materialistic society today. People are obsessed and dominated by it. This is human perversion. The Upanishads speak about the nine-gated city which is the abode of the mysterious Brahman—it is this body. Any medical person will tell you that the activity of the body processes are made up of anabolism and catabolism—combinedly spoken of as metabolism. Anabolism is the building process, catabolism is the breaking down process. The breakdown process naturally leads to the accumulation of debris (mala). Accumulated debris is unwanted matter and naturally if it accumulates it threatens life. It has to be eliminated. For intake, provision has been made through the mouth—you eat and drink and if you want to communicate you have to speak. Because life needs oxygen you breathe through the nose. If you want to get knowledge you have to see and you have to hear also. Then there are the two excretory exits through which we eliminate waste matter. The actual most important function of these two lower extremities is elimination which starts at birth and ends only at the point of death. From the first breath the jivatma takes as a physical entity until the last breath leaves the body, the eliminating function goes on. So these are actually eliminating exits. Out of this entire life-span the reproductive function is performed for only a small period. If we strictly adhere to the injunctions of the Vedas that period is restricted to one-tenth of the life-span.

Otherwise, for the rest of the time—morning, noon, evening, night and if it is winter even at midnight, these exits are used only for drainage. You cannot imagine an architect designing a house or a building without drainage through the bathroom and kitchen sinks, otherwise filth will accumulate and you will have to leave the house. So, you can understand if toxins and waste material are not eliminated from the body, toxic waste will accumulate and soon there will be general toxemia and the person will die.

Long ago when I was a student someone with right understanding told me that these lower extremities are just for drainage. But, if instead of that, you through your peculiar type of imagination focus upon it with some other concept which is only a very specialized function and which is exercised for only a brief period in order that the human species does not become extinct, you become obsessed and enslaved by it.

Why is the pleasure principle linked with the exercise of any sense organ? It is absolutely indispensable, for if it is not coupled with the pleasure principle, the very impulse to exercise it will not be there and therefore will not be indulged in.

The one great problem of modern society is the sexual behaviour of people. This is going from bad to worse over the past several decades. Those who have some contact with Western

society knows what aberrations are going on in this field—especially in the marital field. We know of divorces without limit, a thing which society looked upon with great outrage in the Victorian Era. People were scandalized if a man left his wife and went off with another woman or if a woman left her husband for another man. It was a major scandal. It was a shame! Now, it is the order of the day. Special courts have even been established for dealing with divorce cases only.

Why is this so? The secret of this is how one views the other sex. How does man view woman? How does woman view man? Swami Vivekananda was asked what is the distinctive quality or feature of Indian society as distinct from Western society—he was one who had made a vast practical life study of Indian people and Indian Society, having criss-crossed the whole country by foot, going into villages, towns, cities and families, so these things were familiar to him. Two things he said: One is the concept of Guru-shishya relationship, the second was that in Western society the woman is a wife, she is Mrs. So and So... So the wife-hood of a woman is the dominant factor in Western society, whereas in Indian society she is primarily a mother—a mother figure, and her wife-hood is nobody's concern except the man whom she has lawfully wedded as his life's partner. And the common term for addressing a woman in the whole of India from Cape Comorin to Himalayas, from Nagaland to Punjab is mother, mataji, amma. In public she is always addressed as amma. If a husband refers to his wife he never calls her by name, he always refers to her as the mother of my son, the mother of my daughter. And when visitors are there he refers to her as his child's mother—Ramu's mother. Thus he brought out the central unique feature of Indian society as distinct from Western society.

This gives us a key—what the normal, spontaneous, natural idea of man to woman should be. A man, if he is normal and has a certain level of refinement in his psyche, when he sees a woman the thought should come to him of some human relationship. There is a human relationship between one human being and another human being, so the only thought should be on the basis of some type of human relationship. Therefore, a man is to a woman either a brother, a cousin, a nephew, an uncle, a father or a husband and woman is to a man either a sister, a cousin, an aunt, a niece or a mother. But, if the first thing that comes into the mind is: "I am a man and here is a woman," then there is something fundamentally and basically wrong in the make-up or bringing-up of that person. If a woman looks at a man and says: "Here is a male, here is a man," then if this is the only idea that is evoked with regard to the other sex, it means that there is something missing, there is something fundamentally wrong which is not correct and right within that consciousness.

And what is the anatomy of this error in view, in attitude, in approach, in the feeling itself? The anatomy of this error is an obsession with the physical level of the personality.

A person is a physical, biological being, he is a mental, intellectual, psychological being. He is also a vital, living being, which is neither physical only or psychical only. He has a pranic level where he has hunger, thirst, a feeling of heat and cold. He has a psychological level, and in this psychological level there is a spontaneous, uncontrolled part which keeps constantly in a state of activity in the form of thoughts, memory, imagination, sentiments, emotions, attitudes, moods, over which he has no control at all, it is spontaneous. And there is another part which is

a purposeful exercise of a certain part of the antahkarana (inner being). That purposeful exercise is in the form of observation, perception, discrimination—grasping the distinction between what you perceive, and something other than what you perceive. So, it is a specialized performance, a specialized function that takes place and it is usually purposefully initiated and carried out also. It is called the intellectual process of reasoning, discriminating, inquiring, reflecting and perceiving in a special way. This is the higher prakriti (nature), the buddhi (intellect). Both of them together go to make up the inner psychological level of your being. And then a refined higher level of the buddhi functions as an awareness of what is allowed and what is not allowed as a human being.

"I have a great background. I have inherited a culture. I am not an isolated phenomenon. I am connected with the past. And there is something in me of the totality of the past—their ideals, their views, their attitudes, their concepts of right and wrong. So all these things are functioning within me." And so each one comes here with a certain inbuilt awareness of what is beautiful, what is ugly, what is noble, what is ignoble, what is proper, what is improper, what is right, what is wrong, what ought to be done, what ought not to be done. And this sense of the ideal and what is correct and right, is called the moral sense or ethical sense. This is a higher operation than even the intellectual level of our being. This is an ethical man, a moral man.

And if in your consciousness there has come about a certain refinement, and that refinement brings about your normal consciousness to be in a state of identifying yourself with your ethical level, ethical personality, then your whole life takes on a different plane. Whereas, if there is an essential crudeness in the consciousness within, and it tends to normally and habitually identify itself with the grossest aspect of your human personality—the physical, biological, body aspect, then the entire human reaction comes upon the physical, biological level only. Spontaneously, first and foremost it is the biological level that makes itself felt, demonstrates itself and expresses itself and in this way looking at another only as a physical being and qualified by a certain sex.

If you think: "I am this body, this physical body, physical mechanisms," and therefore being rooted in this awareness, mainly rooted in this consciousness of yourself, naturally, you think of all other beings upon this concept, upon the same level. If someone appears before you, it is a physical body that appears before you, and your reaction to it is also a biological animal reaction. Then naturally it creates a problem right upon the physical level itself.

It needs therefore a refinement of consciousness. Gradually you have to educate yourself to shed—like one shakes off a lose slipper and puts on a new one—one has to shake off the old remnant. There was a certain human race thousands of years ago when there was no intellectual development, no mental development, no evolution, leave alone spiritual development. These beings therefore lived in a state of one hundred per cent body consciousness only, just as the animals live. The animal level of consciousness is totally identified with the body. And if man's consciousness is predominantly on the level of the animal consciousness, he is far from spiritual evolution, and all tall talk about Yoga, sadhana, samadhi, Super-consciousness or Ecstasy is only talk. It is so much of ideas—so much of words. If you have a good command of words you can talk about these ideas, you can give expression to them. But, if you are always rooted and caught

in the net and coils of a gross physical awareness only, and your whole reaction to the outer world of physical things is also upon the physical biological level, then there is a great deal of spade-work to do.

The main function of the lower extremities is drainage, cleansing, elimination. That is their function. But if this is set aside and not given its rightful place and some special function alone is exaggerated and blown-up out of all proportion, and the mind becomes hooked on this wrong exaggerated aspect of the eliminatory instrument, then this causes problems.

The Cosmic Intelligence Power and its manifest counterpart prakriti (nature), has built in a mechanism within all living creatures, that there is a time when this principle of appropriation is not at all manifest, not at all functioning. In an infant and in a child it is not there at all. In its joy of living it is completely extroverted. Children have less body consciousness than adults, so in one way we are grosser than them. Therefore there is a distinct period when this inner element, this inner principle of sex is not at all felt, it is absent. But then, at a certain age, gradually it is made to start manifesting in various ways. First of all in physical ways. Various symptoms appear—little moustaches come, little hoarseness of voice manifests, and a vague awareness of certain strange feelings within the body. These are pre-puberty changes. It is a period when the being gradually goes into pre-adulthood in the form of adolescence. It is the most sensitive part of the human beings' life, and it is then that the individual requires wise guidance, a good atmosphere, right type of company, ideas and environment. Unfortunately in this modern world, everything that is inimical, harmful and undesirable alone forms the outer atmosphere and environment of the society of today.

Our ancients went out of the way to see that the contrary would be the case. They wanted the growing individual to be surrounded by helpful, elevating and ideal surroundings. For this, they formulated a certain mode of life in this period and gave it the most significant term—Brahmacharya Ashrama. In this first quarter of his life he is sent away from the family, from the city, from all sorts of temptations and attractive things. He goes into an ennobling, elevating natural atmosphere—waking up in the morning with the beauty of sunrise, soft breezes and birds singing, breathing unpolluted air, drinking pure water and surrounded by natural flora. He is sent to a Gurukula where a sage and his wife, well learned in scriptures and leading an ideal life of moderation, self-control, good conduct, with noble character and purity take care of them. They live in a family with an ideal daily routine. That was the proper foundation laid down for the whole life. In such a wonderful atmosphere the students thrived. They became ideal individuals. They shone with a certain splendour of purity. They had strong, stalwart limbs and well-formed bodies. They were early risers, did their exercises and bathed in forest streams. They did all types of service—cutting and gathering firewood for the Guru and for his wife's kitchen, cutting grass and gathering leaves for the Guru's goshala, tending the cows, working in the fields. And at the same time they studied—two or three hours of instruction in the morning, two or three hours in the afternoon, and then satsanga at night. Thus they grew up completely protected from all demeaning influences.

So, it is the one-hundred per cent opposite pole to the modern environment in which a student has to struggle even in primary class, with unfavourable circumstances. Everything

around them—the people, the sights, the sounds, the environment, the polluted atmosphere and wrong company—everything negative. So it is an uphill task! Therefore, all the more necessity for raising one's voice and shouting from the house-tops, proclaiming the great message of brahmacharya, self-control, moderation, pure thoughts, pure words, pure company—purity in thought, word and deed; pure literature to read—not touching anything that is degrading, yellow literature, blue films and advertisement boards which you can see from half a mile away, either of some very, very compromising attitude of people or someone with a pistol shooting others. All this is likely to bring a wrong type of inner evolution.

After all, the human mind is a marvellous camera, whatever it sees, it takes in. It is like a super computer. You do not have to feed in data, it feeds of itself. The whole world is its source and this human computer becomes filled with ashlila (dirt), it becomes a garbage can due to the very atmosphere the individual has been put in. So, how much more necessary, how great is the need for giving the right type of instructions—opening their eyes and making them aware to what they should be closed; having ears, what they should not hear; having eyes, what they should not see. How to go amidst this atmosphere untouched, that is the great lesson that is necessary.

Therefore, there is a need for a re-orientation of your own consciousness because it is in terms of the level of your consciousness that you will relate yourself and see and build up your attitude towards other persons and things and beings outside you in the environment, in the universe. You are a person living in this universe. You cannot try to isolate yourself. You cannot try to cut yourself off. There has to be inter-changes, otherwise you will develop an inner sickness. You will become neurotic and self-centered. That also is not a healthy thing. That has to be avoided. There has to be normal human intercourse and at the same time it should be upon a firm healthy basis. Such a firm, healthy basis can come only on the basis of your own level of consciousness.

If your level of consciousness is a completely gross, ignorant, body-based consciousness, physical consciousness, naturally you are going in for trouble, you are only inviting such a vibration from others. You will see others, understand others, relate yourself to others only on this self-same gross biological idea of yourself. If this has to be changed, you have to raise your level of consciousness to a higher level of consciousness. "I am a spiritual being, or I am at least a mental-intellectual machinery having a physical body—but not a physical body having a mind and intellect."

This complete change of your own awareness of yourself, your own idea of yourself is to be brought about and established. That is the key to success in brahmacharya which is the basis of all attainment. If you feel yourself as a gross biological, physical body, your entire approach, your entire relationship with the outer physical world will be upon this plane, and you can well imagine what will be the result of it upon yourself. Every human being will be to you a gross biological physical body only. This relationship will plague you day and night. You will be obsessed only with this physical consciousness. And until you, with various devices, face yourself from this level, no amount of reading, no amount of satsanga, no amount of imagining yourself to be something else, is going to help you in any way. You have to turn the key and

suddenly raise the level. Once this level is transcended, the whole subject of brahmacharya takes on a new direction. Then things have to be tackled upon a different level.

The root cause of all sin is body consciousness. Therefore, if you want to be free of body consciousness you start with your body level. Be rooted in brahmacharya. Brahmacharya is the sense of total mastery of all your senses, self-control and all that is necessary to bring about self-mastery—purity of food, purity of company, purity of reading, nobility of thoughts, having self-restraint (nirodh) in your mind. If any negative down-playing thought comes, instantaneously it must be thrown out. It should not be allowed to remain for a single moment, not even a split second. That type of self-restraint, samskara (impression) has to be cultivated, created within your antahkarana (inner being).

If an undesirable person tries to enter an exclusive club or restaurant, there are people called bouncers at the door, they will catch hold of him and bodily lift him up and throw him out of the door. He cannot gate-crash and get in. So you must have your own psychological, ethical bouncers within you for all gross gate-crashers in the form of wrong thoughts. In the same way, there are machines in the mint and also in sophisticated factories where they select fruits and nuts for export market—they go up a conveyer-belt and different sizes are separated. Anything that is of bad quality gets eliminated and only the best is retained.

In the same way there should be created within your mind a device where anything that is sub-standard, opposed to your spiritual or ethical ideal, automatically gets eliminated, thrown out. These are all methods to elevate your consciousness.

Brahmacharya is total purity—a complete view, different view of looking at things and people and experiences, and more than anything else, a total and different view of looking at yourself. Ultimately others are what you are to yourself. The first change has to come within you, then that change can also begin to come in others.

In a very knowledgeable part of Gurudev's teachings on brahmacharya, He has said: "Change the angle of vision. It is a psychological thing—change of angle of vision. He has given a number of beautiful instances how a change of angle of vision can bring about a total revolution in your perception and naturally in your reactions. When the perception itself becomes changed, your reaction to perception will also become different, not what it was before.

We should make a promise to the Lord and a promise to ourselves that we will enter into a glorious new life with an absolutely changed vision and completely transformed awareness of ourselves, lifting our consciousness from obsession with the gross body and its parts to a level of consciousness where there is an inner awakening, where there is a great light within and we shine with a renewed awareness of our true spiritual identity—I am a Hindu, I am an Indian. I am an inheritor of a great ethical tradition, ethical heritage. I must be a living embodiment of this heritage. I must make myself a personification of dharma. I must become a channel of this great ethical view of life, way of life.

God bless you to make use of the wisdom you have received as your great heritage of the past. My prayers with each and everyone of you in this sublime and noble task of self-culture unto perfection.

Advantages of Brahmacharya

Brahmacharya is a magic word, a key to success in all walks of life. It is a radiance that shines through one's thoughts, speech and activities. It is tejas and ojas. It is verily Para Shakti, Bhagavati, the Divine Mother Herself in manifestation. It is dynamic divinity, it is God in motion. It is a vibhuti of God. God is manifest in this cosmos, in this cosmic phenomenal process as Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshvara. He is present in human society in the form of their respective shaktis—Parvati, Lakshmi and Saraswati, whom we adore every year during the nine nights of Navaratri. And the same Cosmic Being that manifests as Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshvara, that vigorously acts in this phenomenal universe of man as Sarasvati, Lakshmi and Parvati, that same Cosmic Being is residing within us as the great kundalini shakti at the muladhara chakra—the basic centre among the six centers situated along the spinal column, culminating in the seventh centre, the 1000 petalled lotus in the crown of the head (this is the area within the psychic body corresponding to the physical crown of the head). And the most significant of all aspects of kundalini shakti is the energy, the creative force, the creative energy. And therefore, creative energy is said to be God in motion. It is divine vibhuti. It is a manifestation of Para Shakti. The control of one's senses and the resolution to preserve, conserve, transform, convert and sublimate this gross physical force into a subtle mental, intellectual force and ultimately sublimate it into a pure spiritual force that shines in one as intense aspiration, as the power to concentrate, as good thoughts and meditation that leads to Super-consciousness. All this and more the power of continence can do for the human being. Most of the great intellectual giants and geniuses have been persons of great character, self-control and concentration—Vivekananda, Dayananda Saraswati, Mahatma Gandhi.

"Samyam!" (control) say the Upanishads. The uncontrolled one can hardly comprehend the subtler than the subtlest or attain jnana. It is not for the vacillating or the weak. Therefore, Swami Vivekananda stressed a great deal on one's strength—inner mental strength, strength of character, strength of self-control, strength of body and mind.

The basis of this pervasive purity of life—of thoughts, of imagination, of actions, of Brahmacharya—is character. If one has a lofty character, that strength of character enables him to hold on to a high level and standard of living. The basis of character is self-control. The basis of self-control is wise living, avoiding all that is adverse to self-control and wisely, with viveka (discrimination) and vichara (enquiry), ordering one's life in such a way that one always is amidst auspicious surroundings and always wisely avoids temptations. They say: "Discretion is the better part of valour." Therefore one must know how to be and when to be valorous and strong, and when and how to avoid being foolhardy, when to be discrete. There is a saying: "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." Therefore, discretion is the better part of valour. Such discretion, such self-control, such wise-living can arise only from alertness, a vigilant alertness, an inner alertness, to see where one is going, to know what will happen if one goes in that direction, and to be able to pull back if it is the wrong direction and go in the right direction.

The basis of such wise self-control are principles for living adopted after much consideration. The basis of such principles is to have a lofty ideal. "I must become like this. I must become like So and So." The basis of lofty idealism can enable one to achieve any victory and shine. The basis of such idealism is keen aspiration. First of all you must desire it.

The basis of a successful academic career in the university is high distinction in the examination. The basis of high distinction is study, study, study—burning the midnight oil, avoiding all sorts of wasteful activities, avoiding the company of frivolous, hedonistic people and cultivating the company of serious-minded people and keen attention in the classroom when the professor is explaining some new principles or new lesson and lots of homework. This means determination. And the basis of such study and a scholarly attitude towards one's education is seriousness, a desire to succeed, and an aspiration: "I must have top marks, I must be among the first." So, this urge, this keen aspiration becomes something instinctive. It is healthy, it is correct. Zeal, fervour, aspiration are highly laudable. This is a positive, creative, constructive urge. There should be aspiration.

Such aspiration comes from an understanding—that is what is worthwhile having. What is merely external show, if I run after it, I will make a fool of myself. All glitter, external glitter, a fleeting momentary, pleasurable sensation, a titillating of some nerves, leaving one ashamed. Any sense indulgence is just a confession of one's bankruptcy of wisdom, of sagacity, of lack of deep thinking.

This keen aspiration arises when we know that the Supreme Being alone is the fulfilment of all desires and cravings in our quest for happiness. That is ananda (bliss)—sweeter than the sweetest, more nectarine than anything else in this world; the beauty of the beauties, incomparable! You develop a deep faith in this truth, in this central fact of life, that in the Supreme alone you can obtain fulfilment, the attainment of the highest happiness, not anywhere else. If you thus know that these contact born sensations and pleasures are only the wombs of pain, you would not succumb to them. Such knowledge comes from satsanga (company of the wise), Guru Vakya (Guru's words), svadhyaya (study of scriptures). Successful svadhyaya is there where there is deep faith.

You can never be wrong if you have deep Guru bhakti, if you have deep faith, absolute trust in the words of the Guru's teachings. It is the right approach to life. Therefore it is said in the Gita, a person is what his faith is. "Tell me what he believes in—I will tell you what he is. Tell me what company he keeps—I will tell you what that person is." In this way, as is your faith and firm belief, so will be your chesta or endeavour.

Develop, therefore, firm faith in the teaching of the Guru, the scriptures, what you hear in satsanga. And due to constant hearing in satsanga, be convinced of the emptiness of fleeting names and forms, fleeting things which attract you, that seem to be real, but are not real. And being convinced, you will be wise, you will be alert, you will become fired with idealism, a great aspiration, "I must know the Supreme Being, that should be my goal, nothing less, I will not opt for anything less than the Supreme Experience. I want God-realization. I want atma jnana, I

want Self-realization." When this aspiration comes and with this idealism before you, it makes you not live a haphazard, aimless, principleless, characterless life. Idealism makes you strictly adhere to certain noble and sublime principles. And a principled life is the basis of self-control, self-mastery. Such self-mastery is the basis of character. It is character that is the basis of brahmacharya. Brahmacharya is the basis of Immortality, Divine Perfection. Brahmacharya is the basis of Liberation. Brahmacharya is the basis of a radiant Divine life lived with great enthusiasm, great fervour. Such a Divine life is the heart of Gurudev's gospel—His teachings, His message to mankind, His wisdom teachings for all time to come.

God bless you in pondering these fundamental truths about yourself, your life, your character, your conduct, the ideals you have inherited from the past and the sublime way you must make your future by the wise practical way you deal with your present—supported and ennobled by the past. If the present is wisely applied, your future can be a thing of beauty, a joy to you, a joy to others and satisfaction to your own endeavour. May you shine as an ideal human being where everything is in its place, in its right proportion. Our ancients were never kill-joys or cynics. They said enjoy, not for a little time and afterwards become nervous wrecks and go into an asylum or a hospital permanently. But they said enjoy, and live to be a 100 years. One can enjoy and live to be a 100 years only if one is wise and moderate in one's environment, not unwise and immoderate in one's life.

Books on Brahmacharya

Gurudev has written a whole book on Brahmacharya only. Another holy man who propagated spiritual living—character, conduct, ethics, and morality, building up of the body, health-culture, physical culture, and of the same name—Swami Sivananda of Amaravati, near Nagpur in Maharashtra. He also has written a complete book on the subject of Brahmacharya titled: Brahmacharya Hechi Jeevan (Brahmacharya alone is Real life). It was written in Marathi and has been translated into many languages—Kanarese, Hindi, English.

Swami Jagadishananda of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission has also written a whole book on Brahmacharya under the caption: The Creative Power of Continence. Another teacher who became very well-known later on and who used to visit the, Scandinavian countries regularly, Sri Swami Narayanananda Saraswati who had his Ashram on the Dehradun Road in Rishikesh, has also written one or two knowledgeable books on the self-same subject.

THE PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE OF BRAHMACHARYA
By Swami Chidananda

The Four Great Purusharthas

Four great values have been given by our ancients as the objectives to attain which every human individual must strive. These four great values are called the Purushartha Chathushtaya. 'Purushartha' means right exertion or effort. So they have given the same word for the object of effort also. Now, what are these four great values? They gave the foremost importance, they gave the primary place, to the value called ethics or morality. It is called Dharma. Whatever you engage in doing should be that which ought to be done, should be that which is proper to be done, should be that which is right, which is pure, which is moral and ethical. You should not do anything that contradicts the law of ethics and morality. Why? Because, in morality only lies your highest good. In that only lies your highest welfare. If your thoughts, words and actions are moral and righteous, there will be happiness. They will secure for you your welfare and good. Otherwise, you will reap the harvest of bitterness because of a law that pervades this universe, a law that is called the Law of Cause and Effect. This law states: "As a man thinketh so he becometh". This law is also stated in another way, namely: "As you sow, so shall you reap". This Law of Cause and Effect is also called the Law of Karma or Karmaphala. Therefore, if you engage in righteous action, the result of it is auspiciousness and blessedness; the result of it is your own highest good and your own welfare, your own happiness. If you ignore or neglect this law, discard this law, and your actions are not proper, not right, what happens? You invite upon yourself a reaction that is bitter, a reaction that is not conducive to your own good, to your own welfare, because you have to steadily progress towards divine perfection and here you put and create obstacles. You slow down your progress towards that great goal. You create your own miseries. Therefore, having in mind the highest welfare and good of the human individual, our ancients put ethics as the foremost value, because more than anything else, they wanted to secure the greatest benefit and good of the individual soul or Jivatma. And they said: "This is. the way".

So, adhere to the moral and ethical values in life. Never deviate from the ethical standard. Then you will be happy. You may have troubles. People may trouble you and you may have some difficulties; yet you will have happiness. Inside you will have happiness and peace. I say, "Inside", because physical troubles and mental difficulties and torments there will always be. Those you have to suffer according to your Prarabdha. But, if at the present you engage in righteous activity, it will give you immense strength. Take the example of the Pandavas. What all difficulties, trials, tribulations and sufferings they did not undergo! Yet they had that inner satisfaction and contentment that they had not deviated from what was right and therefore it gave them inner strength. They never broke down. They never collapsed. Nothing was able to shake them. They were always firm in their abidance in virtue. Therefore the five Pandavas who abided in and adhered to virtue were able to overcome the hundred Kauravas who lacked the inner strength, because in the latter there was not the strength of virtue, there was not the strength of Dharma. So, Dharma upholds those who uphold Dharma. And those who do not uphold Dharma, they fall. Therefore, the first and foremost value in the Purushartha Chathushtaya is the ethical value or the moral standard in all our activities. This is called Dharma.

Now we come to the second value. You have got the body, you have got hunger and thirst, you feel heat and cold. So you want food, you want shelter, you want clothing. And you want other necessities of life. So, for all this, you want money; and therefore, you must have a job or ply a trade or profession. This aspect of life the ancients did not ignore. They said, "Yes, this is also an inevitable value arising out of the fact that you are living in this world". They called this value Artha. Artha is money, the economic value. Money is inevitable; it is necessary. For that also you must strive. But you must strive for it on the basis of Dharma, on the basis of righteousness. Your efforts to earn your livelihood should not be immoral, unethical or unrighteous. Dharma should be the basis even of your professional activities or business activities. Anything you do to make a living should be based upon Dharma. Dharma should be the basis.

And then, the third value. Any animal—be it a dog, donkey, cow or buffalo—is satisfied if it has food and a place to rest. But man is not like that; he has got many longings, many desires, many ambitions. Man is a vital being with a vital psychological personality within. He has got many longings, many desires, many ambitions and plans and schemes. So, this vital value also was given a place among the Purusharthas; a place was provided also for this vital value arising out of the desire nature of man. The other animals have no desire. They have only the instinct to go by. They want only food and drink and shelter and rest, and therefore, they are content if these are provided to them. But man is not content. He has the desire nature in him. They call it Kama.

The Twofold importance of Dharma

Kama means desire of any kind. But, here also, any desire that goes contrary to morality and ethics should be shunned. It should not be kept, it should not be given any place in your life, because it will stop your evolutionary process, your progress upwards towards God-consciousness. Such desires only are to be harboured in your mind, such desires only are to be fulfilled, as are in accordance with the law of righteousness, with the law of Dharma. So, Dharma is the overall and continuous foundation and basis for all human striving. Even in your professional activities, in your various social and other activities, Dharma must always accompany you. Dharma must always infill your thoughts, words and actions. Thus, the economic value and the vital value pertaining to your Prapancha or your outer worldly life also should be animated by Dharma, pervaded by Dharma. Then it will lead you to Sukha (happiness). If Dharma is abandoned, then it will lead you to Duhkha (sorrow). This is the simple truth.

And another important reason why all these activities and strivings upon the outer plane should be continuously characterized and qualified by Dharma is that only then your life will move in the direction of the highest and supreme value. What is that highest and supreme value? It is the spiritual value which is God-realization, Atma-Jnana, liberation, divine perfection, highest spiritual consciousness and illumination. That is the supreme value. For that only we have taken birth. That only makes life worth living. No matter how desperate life may be, if you have this one goal that you must attain Divine Consciousness, you will get the strength to

overcome and bear all the vicissitudes of life. "I am divine. Temporarily I have forgotten it. And until and unless I attain Divine Consciousness, my life will not be full and I will not remain content."—If that one goal is there with you, no matter what happens to you, all that will look secondary and less important. Whereas, your supreme goal will look the most important of all things; it will dominate your life and it will be enough to take you above all the vicissitudes of life. It will give you strength and definite direction in life, a specific aim in life. And from then on, your life will move in a self-chosen direction. That life cannot be assailed by misfortune. It will not be shaken. Having acquired great strength and power, it will ride triumphant over all the ups and downs of life and move towards the self-chosen goal in a very determined manner. So, the highest spiritual goal it is that makes your life worth living, that gives deep meaning to life. Otherwise, what is the meaning of life? What is the meaning of just eating, drinking, sleeping and one day dying? Doing little petty silly things and one day dying? Death puts an end to all. But what is that which makes life meaningful? Through this life of birth, change, growth, old age, disease, decay and death, you are to attain immortality and deathlessness by making use of this life. You are to attain Divine Consciousness. You must resolve: "I shall become deathless. I shall realize my deathless nature. I shall realize that I am Immortal Soul, Spirit Divine". And you must exert to the utmost to attain that goal. That supreme value is the most important value which gives life real depth, true meaning and a purposefulness. It makes life significant, important, sacred, purposeful. Therefore it is the most important value in life. If that value is there, you get the strength to overcome all difficulties, all the stresses and strains of life, and it is in relation to that supreme value that Dharma acquires an even greater importance, an even deeper significance.

Dharma is important for two reasons. Firstly, if it is there in your secular life of Artha and Kama, in your secular life of the economic and the vital values, it leads to happiness. If it is not there, then it leads to sorrow and misery. Therefore you must have Dharma. This is the lesser significance and use of Dharma. The higher purpose and significance of Dharma is that if it infills your life, then it leads your life to Moksha or the attainment of the highest spiritual value in life. It liberates you once and for all from the wheel of life and death. Then there is no more want, no more sorrow, no more weeping, no more wailing, no more difficulties and problems. You transcend all the Tapatrayas. You become established in a state of absolute peace, absolute contentment, absolute joy. You attain supreme satisfaction, become fearless and free. That supreme experience which is the highest Purushartha or Parama Purushartha, that attainment of Moksha and Divine Consciousness, is made possible only if your entire life is infilled by Dharma. So, Dharma has a direct connection with Moksha. Therefore they put it as the basis of your entire life. And in the framework of this Dharmic life, upon the foundation of Dharmic life, spiritual Sadhana becomes rapidly fruitful. Whatever Japa you do, whatever prayer you say, whatever spiritual study you do, whatever meditation you do, all become like striking a dry match stick on a dry match box...immediately there is fire. Where there is Dharma animating and pervading your entire life, there spiritual Sadhana becomes dynamic, rapidly fruitful and progressive. This is the great ideal of Bharatavarsha. It is inevitable to strive for the economic value and the vital value, because of your earthly nature. But it is only the spiritual value which makes life successful, which liberates you for ever from all the sorrow and bondage. And it is the ethical value which is the most important of all, because both for Prapancha as well as

Paramartha, both for the life here and the life hereafter, it is that which guarantees that your life will lead to happiness and blessedness and not to sorrow and wretchedness.

Conservation of Energy in the Context of a Spiritual Life

And in the context of the Purushartha Chathushtaya or the fourfold value to be attained, we require strength. We require energy. Any effort, any exertion, requires strength and energy. And energy can be gathered together only if it is conserved, only if it is preserved. But, if it is frittered away, you are always in debt. Just as, if you want to build a house or start a business, slowly you put by money and go on saving, saving, saving and then put it in a fixed deposit in some bank, and then, after five years or ten years, you would have enough to start a business or build a house. But, if every month you spend more than you get, if every month your expenditure is more than your income, how can you ever dream of having a house or starting a business? Always you will be in debt. You will be very owing. Your plight will be miserable. Similarly, energy is to be conserved. Conservation of one's energy in order to put it to higher use is the central principle of Brahmacharya. What they call Brahmacharya is a wise direction of our ancients to make the individual's efforts successful. Towards this end, they said: "You must conserve your energy". Because, if energy is sufficiently conserved, you can put it to any use that you want, you can attain anything that you wish to attain. But if you are bankrupt in energy, all attainment becomes difficult. It becomes a long-drawn struggle. So, preservation of energy is the essence of Brahmacharya. Energy is frittered away in a dozen different directions. Too much talking, too much worry, too much wanting, getting fits of temper, anger, fighting and quarrelling, the arguing habit, overeating—all these things drain away energy. All excesses, all immoderate habits, all wastage of nervous and emotional energy through negative thoughts of hatred, envy and jealousy and all health-killing habits like smoking and drinking—they also drain away energy. Thus, Samyama or sense-control becomes an inevitable part of Brahmacharya.

The functioning of any sense wastes away nervous, energy. That should be controlled, that should be wisely checked. And one of the most refined of energies, most concentrated of energies, is the sex energy. The sex energy is what we may call the quintessence of energies. It is the energy-potential in its 24 carat form. It is the quintessence of all that we eat and assimilate and preserve in the system, in the same way as honey is the very quintessence of flowers, and butter is the very quintessence of milk. Thousands of bees go and bring nectar from millions of flowers and work upon it in a huge beehive, and out of that by some miracle of biochemistry, comes honey. Out of litres of milk or gallons of milk comes butter. In the same way, the sex energy is the most rarified and perfectly pure form of human physical energy. If that sex energy is wisely conserved, it becomes available to you for being converted into any other form of energy. For example, if you want to study hard and become a brilliant scholar with a wonderful memory, sex energy comes to your aid. If you want to become a brilliant surgeon, sex energy comes to your aid. If you want to become a great master musician, the preserved sex energy comes to your aid. This is because, sex energy, when preserved, gradually becomes transformed into subtler energy. Of course, there are Yogic processes—Asanas, Pranayama, Surya-Namaskar, high emotions, noble emotions, spiritual sentiments and such other things—which help this work of transformation. So, the work of transformation goes on, goes on, goes on, and the rarified energy becomes available for higher intellectual pursuits, research and invention, meditation and

so on. And, therefore, the wise conservation of this vital energy has always been given an important place in all religions in the context of a spiritual life.

Sex Energy-A Manifestation of Para Shakti

What is this sex energy? This energy, this sex energy, is a manifestation of God. It is Brahman in dynamic expression. It is Shakti, Para Shakti. We all know that this phenomenal universe is the activity of the cosmic power call this which is illimitable, indescribable and infinite. We call this cosmic power Para Shakti, Maha Shakti, Maha Maya or Prakriti. Countless billions of universes come and go through the activity of this great cosmic energy. It is this cosmic energy, this Para Shakti, that manifests as the incredible energy of the sun, the energy of the planets and, the incredible speed at which they whirl in their own orbits. It is this cosmic energy which manifests as the power of gravity, as the power of the sun's radiance, as the power of all these great planets and heavenly bodies, as the power of the wind and other elements. If sometimes the wind is furious, it will even blow up houses. It is the cosmic energy which manifests as the power of fire, as the power of the volcano, as the power of floods, as the power of earthquakes, as the power of the Bhumi (Earth) to bear mountains, rivers and seas. So, earth, air, water, ether—all are nothing but the manifestations of this great power. It is the same power inside the seed that makes the seed grow into a huge tree. It is the power behind lightning and thunder. Any power that you see in this universe is the power of this great cosmic force and it is this same power that animates all living beings, trees, plants, insects, birds, bees, reptiles, fish and animals. It is the power of the lion, it is the power of the elephant and it is the power of the brilliant intellect or genius of a Faraday, a Raman or an Einstein. This self-same power abides in us and animates our entire body mechanism. It is the power that digests our food, that makes our heart pump blood, that makes our lungs breathe, that makes our muscles and joints work, that makes our tongue talk and ear hear. It is this very power that is also present as the sex energy in us. So, sex energy is part of the one indivisible great cosmic power present in the human individual. In its gross biological aspect, it is called the sex energy. In its subtler aspect, it is the energy of discrimination, the power of the intellect to analyze and enquire and ratiocinate. In a still subtler aspect, in its psychic aspect, it is the power of the Kundalini. And in its supreme aspect, it is nothing but Atma Shakti. Because Brahman and Shakti are not two. They are the static and the dynamic aspects of one and the same principle. Therefore, the sex energy is nothing but the presence of the Divine Mother in all human beings. It is something divine, it is something sacred, and its supreme function in the scheme of things of the Creator is to keep going the universal process. It is the function of reproduction which is present in all nature, in all life. Without this subtle power of duplication or reproduction, all species will become extinct. So, the utilization of the sex energy for the purpose of reproduction is actually a sacred process for cooperating with Brahma, the Creator. And any other aspect of the sex energy is a secondary, lesser aspect. And if this energy or power is wisely utilized in a moderate and restrained way, even after such utilization, a sufficient amount of it will be available for higher spiritual development. And if this gross biological energy is converted through Yogabhyasa into a subtler form, it becomes available for deep contemplation, reflection and meditation. Manana, Nididhyasana and Samadhi are enabled through the power of this conserved and converted energy. That is Brahmacharya. So, all practices to successfully conserve and convert the sex

energy into a higher form and utilize it for a higher spiritual purpose are included in the broad meaning of the term Brahmacharya. Therefore, Brahmacharya is not only a single act of restraint; it is a whole way of life. It is that way of living and moving and acting which will take us towards Brahma-Jnana. That is Brahmacharya. And therefore it involves moderation in all our activities and a wise restraint of all our senses.

In the context of Indian culture, of Bharatiya Samskriti, total restraint of the sex energy was laid down upon three Ashramas, namely, the Brahmacharya Ashrama, the Vanaprastha Ashrama and the Sannyasa Ashrama—the student-stage of youth, the retired stage of the elderly person and the monastic stage of the last part of your life. And, even in the Grihasthashrama, legal or legitimate utilization of this power for the purpose of perpetuating the species was laid down. The result was that in the Grihasthashrama, Brahmacharya meant moderation, a wise rational, restrained use of the sex energy for the purpose of procreation. Moderation, and chastity or fidelity to one's married partner, were laid down. It was enjoined upon the married person not to cast any impure look upon any person other than one's lawfully wedded wife or lawfully wedded husband. So, out of this lofty concept of Brahmacharya there arose two great ideals, the Pativrata Dharma and the Eka-Patni-Vrata of the Grihastha. For the married man there was only one woman in the whole universe, his lawfully wedded wife; the other women were like mothers to him. He cast no lustful, passionate, carnal eye upon any other woman. And for the chaste wife there was only one man in the whole universe and that man was her Lord and husband, whom she regarded with reverence and worshipfulness. All other men were like children to her. Towards others she had the Bhav of mother, of cosmic mother. It was only towards one person that she entertained the feeling: "I am a woman. I am wife"; and that person was her lawfully wedded husband. This is the great ideal that has arisen out of the supreme principle of Brahmacharya, the supreme concept of Brahmacharya. Thus, in so far as the pure classical attitude of Bharatiya Samskriti towards the sex energy was concerned, it was one of reverence. The ancient Masters never thought of the sex energy as either ugly or bad or wicked or evil or immoral. Such wrong notions about the sex energy are all the result of a failure to understand the sublimity of this particular force. It is due to superstition and lack of understanding that in normal society, deprived of right instruction and right knowledge, people begin to look upon it as something ugly, as something evil. One reason for the development or evolution of such an attitude is that because of all-too-common human weakness for sex, they had to place some sort of a moral taboo on sex. Otherwise, human weakness is such that it always takes the line of least resistance and, therefore, they said, "No. No. This should not be done. It should not be done in such and such a stage, because Shastras say so". They gave it this sort of colour.

The Human Body Compared to a Mansion

One little point needs to be stressed here. The body is like a mansion. No matter how wonderful a mansion may be, even if it be made of marble and set with jewels, no one will be able to live in that mansion unless it has a kitchen and a bathroom and a toilet. Because, whatever man takes in, part of its goes to form his mind, part of it goes to form his body, and the remaining waste has to be eliminated. And waste is always foul-smelling. The impurities of the body are always foul-smelling. In the outer mansion they have to have a toilet, they have to have a kitchen. If there be no kitchen, no one can live there. You may construct any type of palace,

but if there is no food, no lunch, no breakfast, no afternoon tea—even for a day—no one will live there. But then, when a kitchen is there, you have to provide drainage also. Kitchen means garbage, left-over food, vegetable cuttings, fruit peels and all that. If all this is kept, it will begin to rot and so you have to have a garbage disposal arrangement. You have to have drainage and sewerage. In the absence of all these arrangements, it will not be possible to live in that mansion. Likewise, in the human body, in this mansion of nine gates, in this Navadvara Kuti, where you have an entrance way and windows for light and air and knowledge, for the sake of drainage and garbage disposal, God has provided two holes. Their real importance is that of drainage. They are only drains. This is the only right understanding of the matter. No doubt, the occasional function of reproduction is there, but to over-exaggerate that aspect is foolish. It betrays a lack of knowledge. Because, from birth until death, day after day, thirty days in a month, and three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, the constant function that these exit gates have to fulfil is drainage. And the occasional function that they have to fulfil is in cooperating with Brahma, but that is only some rare occasional function, and that also, only in a very short period of one's life. In the first Ashrama of Brahmacharya, it has no place; in the third Ashrama of Vanaprastha, it has no place; and in the fourth Ashrama of Sannyasa, it has no place. Out of the whole life, it is only in one Ashrama that that particular function of it is exercised. Otherwise, the main function of these outlets is only drainage of impurities. If you change your Drishtikona and understand the body in the right perspective, then a great deal of your problem will be solved. It is taking a wrong view and giving a wrong emphasis which makes one to get into all sorts of difficulties. Secondly, take a look at it from the Vedantic point of view. The Adesha or Sandesha of Vedanta, the primary declaration of Vedanta, is that you are not this body, but that you are the Ajara Amara Avinashi Atma. Then, if you are not to identify yourself with your entire body, how can you identify yourself with one aspect of it? So, if your faith in Vedanta is Pucca, is firm and genuine, if you are true to your Vedanta, then, you have your solution in your own hand.

How to Rise Above Sex

There is another important angle to this matter of Brahmacharya. And that pertains to your aim and ambition in life. What is it that you want out of life? What great desire dominates your life? Is there something that is a consuming hunger in you? Do you want to become the highest musical genius in this world? Or do you want to become the fastest Olympic runner or weightlifter in this world? No matter what your ambition is, if there is some one overwhelming or all-consuming hunger in you, then all other problems recede into the background. They do not present a great difficulty. But, if you do not have such an overwhelming ambition in one direction, then everything becomes a problem and sex also becomes a problem. Therefore, the right way of solving this problem of sex is to rise above it so that it becomes something not important. You have to rise above sex—not wrestle with it, but rise above it. Because, if you do not have an overall concentrated urge or ambition in life, then the clamour of these little senses becomes a great din in your life. Your life will always be under that clamour. But, if you have got an overwhelming urge for something else, then this clamour does not reach you at all, because you are too busy engaging your entire attention in some other direction. So, the right way of solving this situation of sex is to rise above it, by developing great love for God, great love for an ideal, developing passion for a pure life, a moral life, an ethical life, an ideal life and nurturing Tivra Mumukshutva for attaining liberation. If intense Mumukshutva is there, then all

other things recede into the background. They become less important. So, if you want to attain victory over the clamour of the senses, you must arouse within yourself a great fire of higher aspiration. Then, what happens? In order to attain that upon which your heart is set, you give yourself so totally to it that you have no time for other things. Even great scientists do not have this problem, because they are all the time completely absorbed in their scientific research. They do not pay much importance to food or clothing or bathing or anything. Why? Because they are all absorbed in, and interested in, something else. That is the way of becoming established in Brahmacharya, in successful Brahmacharya, in effective Brahmacharya.

Voluntary Self-restraint Is No Suppression

There is a Western idea that sex is a natural urge and so free expression should be given to it. And if free expression is not given to it, the sex urge will become suppressed, will become repressed. And if it is thus suppressed and repressed, it will create all sorts of abnormalities within you and you will develop neurosis and various types of complex and you will become an abnormal person. There is partial truth in it. There is truth in it to the extent that if this suppression and repression is forced upon you by circumstances beyond your control, by social environment, by other taboos and deep-seated inhibitions within you, due to your father's advice or mother's dominance or family and all, then it can give rise to some undesirable inner abnormality. But this situation never applies if realizing the greatness of a higher goal and realizing the necessity of this important Sadhana of self-control in order to attain that goal, you make up your mind fully, willingly and voluntarily. Then there is no question of suppression. If with a full willing heart you enter into this course of self-discipline and self-restraint, then there is no question of suppression. No one is asking you to do it. You want to do it. You are yourself desirous of it. So, done with full willingness, done with great enthusiasm, it becomes a voluntary thing. Then, psychological situations will not arise. On the contrary, every time you succeed in controlling the sense-urge, you get a sense of elation, you get a sense of achievement you get a sense of inner satisfaction that you have succeeded. So, it is something that goes on giving you endless satisfaction and a sense of triumph, a sense of overcoming. Therefore it is entirely a positive process, a very creative and positive process, not a negative and suppressive process. So, regarding Brahmacharya, if you take the right approach and attitude towards it, then it is simple. It is a question of conserving energy, of preserving energy, so that it may be utilized for higher things which you wish to attain.

The energy in you is a part of the great cosmic energy. Cosmic energy, when individualized in the human being, manifests in many aspects. And one very important aspect is the physical biological aspect. That is the sex energy. A higher aspect is the mental and occult aspect. The mental and occult energy is called Medhas. Then there is in the individual the psychic aspect of the cosmic energy. This is the Kundalini Shakti. And above everything else, in its highest aspect, the cosmic energy shines in the human beings as Atma Bal, as Atma Shakti, as the radiance of the Atman. So, think over all this. All this is food for thought. These are seeds of certain concepts for your further reflection.

BRAHMACHARYA—AN OUTLOOK OF CONSCIOUSNESS

By Swami Krishnananda

The last one among various items of self-restraint constituting the Yamas, is Brahmacharya, which actually means the 'conduct of the Absolute'.

'Brahman' is the Supreme Being; 'Charya' is conduct, or behaviour. How God behaves—that is called Brahmacharya, finally. It is a very difficult thing for us to understand, because we do not know how God behaves, how the Absolute conducts Itself. The attitude of the Supreme Being towards the universe and all beings is Brahmacharya, and to the extent that we are able to participate in this attitude, it may be said that we are also following that canon. Our participation in the attitude of the Supreme Being may be infinitesimal, but there should be at least this 'tendency' towards holding the same attitude, the same outlook as that of the Lord. So, Brahmacharya is an integrated outlook of consciousness, an attitude of the personality, and an interpretation of things. These are the essential basic principles of Brahmacharya. And minus these principles, the term Brahmacharya will yield only a chaotic meaning which will not help us much. In the Anu-Gita of the Mahabharata, a similar broad and majestic interpretation of Brahmacharya is given, as coming out from the mouth of Sri Krishna Himself, during his instructions to Arjuna. The idea behind this significant term Brahmacharya, translated as the conduct of the Absolute, is that it is a gradual adjustment of the powers of one's personality towards larger and larger dimensions of impersonality, because, the Absolute or Brahman is the Supreme Impersonality conceivable and existent. There is no externality to the Absolute and, therefore, it cannot be pulled in any outward direction. It has no conscious relationship with anything, though it is related to everything in the world. It cannot be said that God is not related to the world, He is related even to the minutest of things; even to a grain of sand, God is related. Yet, in a way, He is not-related to anything. The idea is that the attitude of the Supreme Spirit is of a generalized or universalized relationship with all things,. free from particularized or specialized interpretations or evaluations in regard to any thing or any object.

How Our Energy Gets Diverted and Dissipated

Whenever there is a specialized outlook in any particular direction, along the channel of an object or a group of objects, living or non-living, consciousness moves in that direction. No matter what our interest is in that direction, our mind moves. When the mind moves, the Prana also moves. When the Prana moves, the energy also moves. So, one follows the other. Our mental interest in any particular direction draws the power of the Prana in that very direction, and like a charge of electricity, our energies are diverted. Whenever we think of an object, especially when we do so with a particular interest, which process is called the Klishta Vritti in the language of Patanjali, we are drawn towards that object, a part of us goes to it. Any interest psychologically manifest in the direction of any particular object is a diversion of energy along that channel, and psychological or emotional interest is nothing but a way of transferring oneself, at least in part, if not in whole, to that particular centre wherein one's interest lies. So, in some measure, we cease to be ourselves for the time being when we admire something, love something, or are attracted towards something. Sometimes, we can be wholly lost to ourselves when the attraction is full and hundred-per-cent, as may happen when we are looking at a

painting, or enjoying a beautiful landscape, 6r reading a piece of lofty literature. The object may be conceptual, visible or audible, it makes no difference; we get transferred. When we listen to an enrapturing melody, our being is transferred to the modulation of the voice which is the music or the melody. When we look at a beautiful form, a landscape, a painting or any other object, we are drawn in our consciousness, and we are drawn even in reading arresting literature. In all these processes of sensory or intellectual absorption, outside oneself, there is a channelizing of force of which we are constituted and which forms our strength. As long as we do not sell ourselves to any outside object, do not participate in anything external, we stand by ourselves. Otherwise, in some percentage, we cease to be ourselves and become another. If one becomes another and does not continue to be what oneself is, A becomes B for the time being, and there is a cessation of the characteristic of A. The subject becomes the object in its evaluation of the object as something in which it has to take interest for some purpose which is in its mind. This should not happen, holds Patanjali, in essence. Because, if this happens, the energy that is supposed to be conserved for the purpose of meditation on the universality of the Purusha will be spent out in other directions, and to that extent, we will be losers of our strength. The fickleness of the mind or the absence of memory about which we often complain, the distraction to which the mind is heir to, the jumping of the feelings from one centre to another—all these are attributable to the fluctuation of energy in our system. It is like the torrential Ganga moving in force with her waves dashing up and down and not resting stable as a limpid lake without movement. When our energies are in tumult, the impact of it is felt by the mind. We are shaken up in our whole system, because of the desire of the personality to move outside itself. As milk gradually becomes curd by an internal shaking of itself, the subject can turn into the object. And love of any kind is nothing but the transference of the subject into the object in some measure, be that object perceptible or merely conceptual. The very thought of the object disturbs the mind. This is mentioned in a famous passage by Bhishma in the Shanti Parva of the Mahabharata.

As we have noted earlier, the thought of an object is of two kinds, called the Aklishta Vritti and the Klishta Vritti by Patanjali. We can think of an object through an Aklishta Vritti or we can think of it through a Klishta Vritti. When we open our eyes and look at a large tree standing in front of us in the forest, al Aklishta Vritti is formed in the mind. It is a modification of the mind, because the mind has transformed itself into the form of the tree which we are beholding. But, it has not upset our emotion. It has not drawn our attention largely. We just look at it and are aware that there is a tree. To the extent that we are aware that there is some object outside us, the mind has transformed itself; it has ceased to be itself for the time being, though it has not caused us any sorrow. The tree has not attracted us or repelled us. But if we see a cobra with its hood raised, the modification of the mind at that time is not merely Aklishta, it is not merely a gazing at an object without internal association of emotion. Because, the emotion acts at the sight of a snake, while it will not act in that manner when we look at a tree or a mountain. Even as there is a particular type of emotional reaction at the time of the perception of an object like a cobra, there is another type of reaction of a similar intensity when we look at things which are highly valuable from our point of view. It may be a large treasure-chest or something else which we think is worthwhile. So, anything we like or dislike evokes a Klishta Vritti in the mind. A thing in which we are not particularly interested either way evokes an Aklishta Vritti in the mind. For the purpose of Yoga, both these Vrittis have to be subdued.

Neither the Klishta nor the Aklishta is a desirable thing from the point of view of Mano-nirodha (control of the mind) or Chitta-vritti-nirodha (control of thoughts), which is Yoga.

The objects of the world speak in a language which we understand in our own way. They get transformed into a meaning when they enter into the mind of individuals; and each individual has his own or her own reading of any particular object. Every object sings a song and we listen to this music, but its meaning is different for different persons. For instance, the same word may convey different meanings to different persons because of the association of those persons in different ways with the particular context in which the word is uttered. All objects in the world speak to us in a psychological language or with a philosophical significance. But, the association of each one of us with them is such that it reads a specialized meaning in this generalized evoking of reaction from us by those objects. This particularized interpretation by each individual in answer to the general call of objects is his love or hatred. Objects of the world are not intended for being loved or for being hated. They exist as we also exist. Just as we do not evince any particular emotional love or hatred towards ourselves, and our loves and hatreds are only in regard to things outside ourselves, we can extend this logic to other objects also. No one assesses himself in terms of love and hatred. His assessment is in regard to other things, other persons. So, studying things in an impartial manner, we find that loves and hatreds are outside the scheme of things. They are not in the order of nature. They do not exist in nature at all. But for us, they only exist and nothing else! We are immersed in this tumultuous chaos, or the clamours of the senses and the mind, which go by the name of likes and dislikes.

Conservation of Energy for Brahma-Sakshatkara

Here is the basic foundation of the great admonition by the Yoga teacher that we have to conserve energy. We generally understand Brahmacharya to be celibacy, a very poor translation of the word, and a misdirected meaning also. By celibacy we mean abstinence from marriage, and we associate or identify celibacy with Brahmacharya or continence in the light of the requirement of Yoga, especially as mentioned by Patanjali. But, nothing of the kind is Brahmacharya. It is not non-marriage, and it is not celibacy in its popular meaning. A person who has not married need not necessarily be a Brahmacharin. And a person who has married need not cease to be that. Because, what we have to be careful in noting in this context is the intention behind this instruction, and not merely the following of it in social parlance. The intention is the conservation of energy, and the directing of the whole of one's personality towards the great objective of universal consciousness. And the energy of the system is required for any kind of concentration, not merely for God-realization or Brahma-Sakshatkara. We require energy even to solve a mathematical problem. Even to build a bridge across a large river, even to study the minute particles of nature in a physical research laboratory, one requires a tremendous concentration of mind. Even to walk on a wire in a circus requires concentration. So, wherever there is a necessity to hold one's breath and concentrate one's attention, as in walking on a very narrow passage, tremendous energy is required, concentration is necessary. A two-feet wide bridge without any protection on either side and spanning a stream flowing in a deep gorge below—we know how we will walk on that bridge, holding our breath and thinking only of that narrow passage and nothing else. Certainly we will not be thinking any other distracting thought in our mind. Like that, the fixing of the mind on the great ideal of Yoga

requires a complete surrender of oneself, in every part of one's being, in the form of concentration. This cannot be done, says Yoga, if we have got other interests.

So, a lack of Brahmacharya means nothing but the presence of interests other than the interest in Yoga. The distracting object may be anything. If we have got a strong interest in something which distracts our attention, the energy goes. Any kind of leakage of energy in any direction, caused by any object or any event or context, is a break in Brahmacharya. A burst of anger is a break in Brahmacharya, though one does not normally think so. No one condemns a man because he is angry. We may even think him to be a wonderful person in spite of his burst of anger, but the truth is that he has failed utterly in his Brahmacharya. He is broken down totally. Because most people are tradition-bound, they go by the beaten track of social tradition and custom, and think that religion is nothing but what society sanctions. But, it is not like that. Religion is not merely the requirement demanded by a Hindu society or a Christian organization. It has nothing to do with these things. What the universe expects us to manifest from our side, in respect of it, is the great religion of mankind, the religion of God or the religion of the universe. Nobody is going to save us, merely because we are religious in the eyes of the people. In that case, we may well go to dogs with all our religion. What will help us, what will guide us, what will take us by the hand and lead us along is the great law which we obey, in the manner in which we are required to obey it, under the circumstances of our relationship with all things in the universe. So, in every way, we have to conserve our energy without any kind of distraction.

The Individual—A Pressure Centre

The philosophers, the mystics, the saints and the sages have made a thorough analysis of the energies of the human mind, the psycho-physical organism in all its completeness. It would appear that we are centres of pressure or stress. Every individual is such a centre, which seeks to break down this pressure, overcome this stress, by adopting some means which it thinks is the proper one under the circumstances. But, the understanding of the way in which this stress is to be removed depends upon one's own stage of evolution. Everyone knows that stress and strain are not good, but everyone does not know how to be free from them, because the causative factors of stresses and strains are not properly understood or analyzed. We may know that we are sick, but we may not fully know why we are sick. And unless we know the cause behind our illness in the form of psychological stress and strain, distraction of attention, like and dislike, we will not be able to handle this subject properly. The so-called desires of man are the outer expressions of his personality to relieve itself from the stresses and strains in which it finds itself shackled. We are perpetually in a state of mental stress and nervous pressure from childhood to doom, and the whole of our life is spent only in trying to find out ways and means of relieving ourselves of these stresses and strains, and we have our own way of doing it. The way in which we try to relieve ourselves of these stresses and strains—this way is called the expression of desires. What is called desire is the method we adopt to relieve ourselves of our tensions, nervous and psychological. So, each person tries his own method to relieve himself of his tension, according to the manner of his understanding. But, most of these ways are misdirected ways. They increase the tension on account of ignorance about the reason behind the arising of the stress or the strain.

Stresses and Strains—Their Cause and Cure

The stress or the strain has arisen on account of a separation of the individual from Nature. The world has cast us out as exiles. We have been thrown outside the realm of Nature as unwanted children. Our internal desire, finally, is to unite ourselves with Nature which is our mother or our parent. The relief that we are seeking from our stresses and strains is ultimately a desire or a longing to become one with our parent, from whom we have been cut off or isolated. Our desire is to possess everything. And the desire to possess is called love. What goes by the name of love of any kind in this world is a desire to possess things, which are considered as instruments capable of relieving us of our stresses and strains. Whether we are right in this interpretation of the situation or not is a different matter. But, just as a little bit of scratching of an eczema patch will give the sufferer a little relief, a forgetfulness of the tension or the stress for the time being is imagined to be a way of relief from the stress itself. When a larger stress swoops down upon us, the lesser stress is forgotten. We are directed away from the lesser stress and the pain, we even forget it for the time being, when a larger stress or strain comes and sits on our head. Let us suppose that we have some worry and we are thinking about it. A larger worry comes and then we forget the lesser worry. Because, the higher thing has come. All our pains, sorrows and complaints vanish in a minute, in a trite, when we are about to be drowned in a river, for instance. We do not complain about anything at that time. Everything would seem to be all right if only we could be saved from possible drowning. Because, that is a problem larger than all the other little problems about which we are constantly complaining in life. So is the case with our asking for the fulfilment of our desires by contact with things.

The Havoc Wrought by the Externalising Senses

In one of the Sutras, Patanjali tells us that sensory contact with things is not the way of relieving tension caused by desires, because desires cannot be removed by any kind of sensory contact. Our desire is not for the contact. That is the whole point, though it appears that the senses tell us to come in contact with various things in the world for the relief of our tension. We are not asking for things. Nobody wants anything in this world finally. But, it appears as if we are wanting them, due to a mischievous interpretation given to these circumstances by our senses, by externalizing our internal anguish for a communion with all things. All loves, all desires, are urges for communion with things. While our urge within is a holy and pious impulse to come in union with all things, with Nature as a whole, this impulse is thrown in the direction of space and time and is externalized by the powers of the senses. What is the result? The longing of ours, which has its meaning in one direction, takes another shape because of its reflection through the senses. While our face is attached to our body, it looks as if it is outside us when we see it in the mirror. We are not outside ourselves, we are in ourselves. But, it appears as if we have gone out of ourselves, because of the presentation of the mirror in front of ourselves. The mischief is done by the mirror. Some such catastrophic activity takes place when our loves, likes, emotions and desires are cast into the mould of the senses. The senses have only one work to do, to externalize everything. So, even our desires are externalized, while really our desire is for something else. That is the reason why we are not satisfied, no matter what objects are given to us, we are always disillusioned in the end. Whatever be our possession, it is not going to satisfy us finally.

Because we are asking for some particular thing, and we are given another thing by the dacoits of the senses, they are really thieves.

Very strange is this phenomenon that the mind spatializes itself and temporalizes itself in its activity, when it affiliates itself to the activities of the senses, and its own desires for something which it has lost appear as desires for those things which are outside it. This is a highly significant situation in which everyone is finding himself or herself, something which escapes one's notice always, a very dangerous circumstance about which we need not talk much, because it is so clear. And one need not be told again and again as to why the ways in which we try to fulfil our desires are not the proper ways. Firstly, there is a basic blunder in the very attitude of the mind in imagining that what it seeks through the fulfilment of desires lies outside it. The other blunder is, that in its movement towards the so-called external things, it has lost its energies. It has weakened itself. The Self, when it becomes the non-self, becomes a corpse, becomes dead. So, a person who has desires is a weakling. He has no strength at all. He has neither physical strength nor mental strength. The more the unfulfilled desires, the greater is the weakness of the body and the mind. One cannot walk even. One cannot digest food. One cannot think, cannot remember anything. This happens when there are too many desires unfulfilled. But, what to do under the circumstances?

Desire—A Metaphysical Evil

As students of Yoga interested in the true welfare of our souls, we must be able to know what has really happened to us. We should not be wool-gathering, we should not be in a fool's paradise even in the name of religion or spirituality. Any kind of outward ritualistic movement of our personalities, even in the name of religion, is not going to save us, in the end, because this evil called desire is a metaphysical evil. It is not a social evil, it is not a physical evil. It is a metaphysical evil, as the philosophers call it. It is a cosmic catastrophe, and therefore, it requires all the analytical capacity that we are capable of to know what has happened to us, and know how we can gradually wean ourselves away from this impulse that is dragging us out from ourselves in the direction of the objects of sense. This weaning oneself away from objects is done very gradually. The fulfilment of desires is not condemned in the religion of India especially, though it is well known that desires have to be completely extirpated one day or the other; because, they are bondages which tether the soul to the body and its physical associations. The great system of social living and personal living inculcated in India, and accepted by other great philosophers in other countries also, is known as the Varnashrama system, a highly scientific analysis of the human situation and the desires of man and the needs of man at different times. We have various kinds of needs, though all needs may be called desires, and all desires may be called undesirable things in the end. Yet, when they are there as realities to the senses and the mind, and not lesser realities than our own bodies and our personalities, we have to tackle them with great caution. We have to interpret them as realistically as we interpret our own selves. The objects are as real as ourselves and as unreal as ourselves. To the extent that we are real, the things connected with us are also real. And to the extent that we are unreal, to the same extent, they are also unreal. The subject and the object evolve simultaneously. The evolution is not just individualistic and subjective. So, this system of Varnashrama is a systematic procedure to adjust ourselves and adapt ourselves to the circumstances of life, horizontally in society, and vertically in our own

personality. The horizontal adjustment is the Varna and the vertical adjustment is the Ashrama. We have to be complete in society, in our relationships with people, and we have to be complete in our own selves by a suitable harmonious alignment of the various layers of our personality. Such an adjustment is very effectively brought about by following the great canons of the Varna and the Ashrama.

Varnashrama—An Aid to Free Ourselves from the Grip of Nature

People generally think that Varna means caste, but it is not that. It means a class. The principle of the classification of society is called the Varna-Dharma. It is a classification, not a 'castification'. To say that Varna means caste is to give it a wrong name and an erroneous interpretation. No man is complete in himself, and therefore, no man can be satisfied merely in his own self without the cooperation of other persons. Man is, among other things, intellect, will, emotion and energy. There are certain people with a tremendous physical capacity, but intellectually they are poor. There are others who are rationally and intellectually brilliant, but physically weak. The other two aspects, namely, emotion and will, are also distributed disproportionately among people. Everyone is not possessed of these characteristics in the same measure. Inasmuch as everyone's intention is the welfare of all human beings, the solidarity of mankind in general, it is necessary that we share among ourselves the commodities that we have. The commodities are not necessarily physical ones; they can be psychological ones also. If one has great intellectual capacity and spiritual acumen, which are necessary for the welfare of society, but not other facilities, he will share the knowledge and wisdom and the directing intelligence that he has with others, for the facilities which he does not have. The mutual cooperative activity of society—spiritually, administratively, economically and manually—forms the essence of the Varna system. The classification into Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras is not a categorization of people into superior and inferior types, into bosses and subordinates, but it is a classification of the functions of individuals according to their knowledge and capacities, for the purpose of a complete cooperative organization of humankind, with a noble intention and purpose. This is one way in which we can be happy in this world. Otherwise, we will be in misery everyday, every moment. The desires of ours are classified in this manner, and they are given an opportunity of permissible satisfaction, by a mutual cooperation horizontally in this manner.

There is the other side, namely, the vertical side, which is the subject of the Ashrama-Dharma, or duties pertaining to the different Ashramas, or stages of life. Just as we have totally misunderstood the meaning of the Varna system, we have also misunderstood the meaning of the Ashrama system. Just as we condemn the classification of Varna as caste distinction, we convert the classification of the stages of one's life by way of Ashrama, into a kind of dead routine of religion. Neither Varna nor Ashrama is a routine. Varnashrama is a vital participation in the processes of life, externally as well as internally. Externally it goes by the name of Varna, and internally it goes by the name of Ashrama. The idea behind this is the fulfilment of the requirements of the human personality, in the way it would be required, for the purpose of a transcendence of all limitations, with the great goal of Moksha, or liberation of the spirit, in mind. What a glorious psychological organization this Varnashrama is! No item in this classification is unimportant, because nature catches us by the throat, with such a firm grip, that

we cannot free ourselves from its compulsive pressure without the aid of the Varnashrama-Dharma. We are caught firmly by Nature socially, physically, vitally; psychologically, rationally and even spiritually. So, we have to free ourselves from these clutches or pressures by a gradual dissociation of ourselves from nature, as we untie its knots one by one.

If we tie a thread into a dozen knots, and then want to untie them and straighten out the thread, we do not go to the bottom knot first, but rather to the topmost one. The topmost knot is untied first, then the previous one or the eleventh knot, then the tenth, then the ninth and so on, till at last we come to the very first knot. We cannot touch the first knot in the very beginning. Similarly, in spiritual life, the first problem is treated last, and the last problem is taken up first. Because, the first is more subtle and more proximate to the realities of things than the later ones which are the evolutes of the causes. The effects have to be taken care of first, and the causes later on. So, outwardly as well as inwardly, these systems of organization known as Varna and Ashrama, are procedures enjoined upon every person, for untying the various knots of entanglement in life, engendered by one's needs which are social, physical, vital, emotional, intellectual and so on.

Such a vast involvement is associated with this little thing called Brahmacharya, by the practice of which we do not merely put on a conduct personally and socially but establish ourselves in a status of strength, where we are so tuned to things that our energies do not move at all in any direction, but are held up in such a way that there is no urge within ourselves to transfer our energies to outside things for the fulfilment of our desires. Desires have to be fulfilled, and also, they are not to be fulfilled. Both these statements are correct statements. But, the statements must be understood in their proper meaning. For instance, hunger has to be appeased, though hunger is a disease of the body, though it is a canker that eats into every man's vitals and compels him to remember always that he is a body. Can anything be worse than this that one should be made to feel always that one is a prisoner? One may be a captive in it prison, but why should one be made to think everyday that one is a prisoner? But, that is precisely what hunger does. All the time it makes you remain body-conscious. Such an evil thing it is, but how can one get out of it. By meeting the demands of the body, while exercising very great caution simultaneously. That is why we put on clothes when we feel chillness; we go to sleep when we are tired; we eat a meal when we are hungry. We go for a walk and we do many things. Now, all these activities are so far removed from the goal of our life, as the north pole from the south, and yet they are taken as necessities. We may call them necessary evils, if we like. They are evils, no doubt, but they are necessary evils. So, they have to he befriended first, in order that we sever ourselves from them ultimately. The intention behind the practice of the canons of Varna and Ashrama in a graduated manner is not the indulgence of desires, but their graduated, scientific, systematized and cautious fulfilment in a measure that is permissible and required under the circumstances for the purpose of freeing oneself from them finally. So, we do not eat because we want to eat, but because it is necessary to reach a stage where we need not eat at all. There is, therefore, a deep background behind the psychology of the canons known as the Yamas and a clear understanding of this background will help us to practice these canons better.

MARRIAGE: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?
By Swami Krishnananda

Scientists are accustomed to the well-known phenomenon known as the "Big Bang," an occurrence which is regarded as the origin of creation of the universe. The meaning attributed to this phenomenon is that the universe was originally a single Cosmic Atom, as it were, known in Sanskrit terminology as Brahmanda, which split into two parts by a bang, an instantaneous separation of itself into two parts, representing what may be called the Cosmic Subject and the Cosmic Object. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad has already proclaimed that there was one Universal Self which projected Itself as a subjective side and an objective side of Itself, the Cosmic Positive and the Cosmic Negative. The intriguing secret behind the relationship of the two Cosmic parts seems to be that there is on the one hand the duality of the positive and the negative and there is on the other hand the correlativity of the positive and the negative, since the two phases are actually the two types of the phenomenal occurrence in the otherwise unitary indivisible original existence.

Sage Yajnavalkya says that each unit of life is actually like a split "pea," in which one cannot easily say whether the pea is one or two things joined together. Also, the very idea of a bi-polar existence implies the interference of space and time, and even if it is accepted that the apparent two-fold life is an appearance of the original one life, the idea of "another" cannot arise unless there is some medium through which it looks as if it is there, just as one person can look like two persons when one beholds oneself through the medium of a mirror. Such a possibility involves the existence of space and time which are the most elusive things everywhere in creation. No one can understand what these actually mean since these are involved in the process of thinking itself, and no one can also deny that they do exist.

The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad goes on to say that the two Cosmic parts are comparable to husband and wife, in which context, the one part rushes towards the other part to come in contact with it while the other part wishes to avoid the contact since such a contact is not possible as the so-called "other" really cannot stand apart from that which seeks the contact. Humorously, through an analogy, the Upanishad says that the wife aspect ran away to escape the husband aspect coming in contact with it since an attempt at such a contact looked meaningless and also abortive. The Upanishad goes further and says that the bi-polar wholeness reduces itself to lesser and lesser "wholes," from gods in heaven down through humans, animals, plants and trees and even the lowest of creatures like insects, thus making out that this dual pull is present everywhere in creation from the highest to the lowest of created elements.

At the human level this principle of bi-polar existence takes an interesting turn, since in the human being there is an element of the instincts of the lower species and at the same time a reason which reflects the characteristics of transcendental existence. While in the earlier stages of evolution mentioned, the process of bi-polar existence appears more or less as a spontaneous feature, at the human level it becomes slightly complicated due to the reason and the instinct clashing with each other almost everyday of one's life, causing a lot of misery. As the human being is a unit in human society, the laws framed by society condition the activities of a person, while the instinctive impulses come from the other levels of life insist that they should have an

upper hand over all things, and when the instincts are strong enough they can rebel against social norms, much to the chagrin of the individual, as is well-known in human history. In order to obviate this problem of conflict between individual and society, people in a common agreement among themselves have instituted a system called marriage.

Now, what exactly is marriage? It is quite clear that it is a form of legalization of the inherent instinct of the bi-polar existence asserting itself and then a check upon any uncontrolled ravaging activity of the instinct. The point is that a person cannot live totally isolated from society since existence itself would be difficult without cooperation from others. Inasmuch as this instinct is present in every person and everyone would like to manifest it as much as possible, there would be difficulty in such a behaviour since everyone else also would like to do the same thing. This goes to say that the institution of marriage is a process of granting limited freedom to the operation of the instinct permitting it to operate within the circle of social norms, with due respect for the welfare of everyone equally.

However, with all this that has been said above, a question will arise as to why is there such an attraction between the male and the female. Philosophically, to answer this question in the light of what has been detailed above, the explanation would be the struggle of the two parts of the one whole to unite themselves into a single unit of existence. But as two things cannot become one, the sexual demand fails to fulfil its purpose ending in exasperation, disillusionment and a distrust in the meaning of life itself. The other aspect is the much neglected side of the phenomenon, namely, Nature's intention to multiply the species. Everyone knows the power of Nature and no one can resist it. The would-be entrant's push towards this world, which we call the coming of a child into existence, is the process of an integral impulse since the child is a whole being, as whole as either the father or the mother. The pressure of the would-be individual, being very strong, compels the male and the female to seek each other with great vehemence, to such an extent that the male and the female elements would even wish to die if this impulse is not going to be gratified, forgetting thereby that they are only serving the injunctions of Nature, though Nature has cleverly put them under an illusion that what they do is for their own personal benefit. Since everything is destroyed by Time, there is a fear that one's existence would be terminated one day, and to escape from the grief of this possibility, the biological impulse wishes to reproduce itself as a child, a son or a daughter, which become a replica of the parents, whom they hug as themselves, as if the child is inseparable from the parents. Considering the fact that no one can go against the injunctions of Nature, sexual life permitted by marriage should be regarded as reasonable and unavoidable, but considering the welfare of the individual himself or herself, it brings no such benefit, ending in depletion of energy, slowly tending towards old age and physical extinction. It looks that the whole drama of creation is a "hide and seek" affair of the truths of existence where everyone does something helplessly under the impression that it is done voluntarily for one's own assumed immortal satisfaction, while the fact is that the entire exercise is a hypnotized person's supposed voluntary enterprise, though commanded by the hypnotist's will.

BIRTH CONTROL

By Swami Sivananda

Instructions for Householders

Strict regulation of sexual life and a rigid practice of non-violence are necessary if you want to have progress on the spiritual path.

If you use contraceptives you will never learn to exercise self-restraint

He who uses contraceptives is an immoral man.

Learn the virtue of self-restraint. The use of these artificial methods will eventually sap your energy. It will break down all restraint.

There is an intimate connection between sex and control of the palate. He who has controlled the palate has already controlled all the other organs.

Sattvic food will make the practice of Brahmacharya easy.

Continence is not harmful. On the other hand it conserves nervous energy. It gives great mental strength and peace of mind. Sexual indulgence leads to moral and spiritual bankruptcy, premature death, nervous weakness and loss of one's faculties, talents and capacities.

Manu says: "The first-born child is born of Dharrna and the rest of Kama or lust. The sexual act for mere pleasure is not justifiable".

Passion for the flesh or body is not pure or real love. It is only infatuation born of ignorance. You do wicked deeds and kill your soul on account of this passion.

Population Should Be Checked

How is the world to feed all the millions? In spite of advanced agricultural methods and reclamation of waste land, it has been found impossible to balance food production with the increase of population. Hence, the growth of population has to be restrained if there is to be no lowering of the standard of living. If this is not done there will be mass starvation, famine and consequent degradation of morality. Special agencies of the United Nations are busy in finding out a long term solution. The United Nations Population Commission is now at work, assisted by the Economic Council for Asia and the Far East.

No doubt in principle it is right that population has to be restricted. But how? Naturally, through the advanced means of planned parenthood. What do we mean by this?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Health Mnister of India answers: "I need hardly say that our educated class thinks of planned parenthood mainly in terms of city-dwellers and educated men

and women. There are also many amongst the poorer classes whom our social workers can reach in the cities, where their organizations are working. But they also invariably think of birth control by the artificial methods of contraceptives, which have taken a firm hold of people in countries of the West. I am totally unable to reconcile myself to this view".

Indeed, the unanimous answer as to how to plan parenthood has been the usage of contraceptives. It is a pity that most of our learned leaders, with very few exceptions like Amrit Kaur, should stoop so low in aping the West, with complete disregard and ignorance of their own heritage.

The Vedic preceptors strictly enjoined on their students the practice of unbroken celibacy; and when they had completed their studies and were advised to get married, it was not for the sake of physical pleasure but for the sake of progeny. Self-restraint gave them moral strength and spiritual vision. Through self-restraint they achieved ethical perfection and improved their intellect.

There is no safer and better solution for the restriction of our population than practice of self-restraint. No number of birth control clinics and no amount of propaganda advocating artificial methods can take root in these masses, whose traditional background has been always soaked in spirituality. No method other than self-restraint can be morally and spiritually successful either in India or anywhere else in the world.

In India it was Mahatma Gandhi who, for the first time, organized stubborn opposition against the use of contraceptives for family planning, as artificial methods gave free latitude to the married and even encouraged the unmarried to embrace the path of self-indulgence with vulgar impunity.

Gandhiji said, "If the rural population practiced moral restraint they could limit the size of their families better than through the use of contraceptives. Artificial methods are like putting a premium on vice. The remedy will be worse than the disease." When Gandhiji said this, many eminent leaders, doctors, lawyers and educationists (even some of his foremost disciples), rose to contradict him, saying, "The restraint of the natural impulse in men and women would lead to serious consequences. There will be mass neurosis. Their zest for living and their mental faculties would ebb away, their lives would become drab and dull," and so on and so forth.

All these charges were baseless and were but a confession of lasciviousness on the part of the crusaders against self-restraint. This has been adequately proved by distinguished scientists and doctors and by numerous scriptures belonging to all faiths. To quote a few such noteworthy remarks, let us choose them from Western spokesmen in whom our educated intelligentsia are prone to believe much more than in their own scriptures.

Sir Lionel Beale, Professor of the Royal College in London, says: "Sexual abstinence has never yet hurt any man. Virginity is not too difficult to observe, provided that it is the physical expression of a certain state of mind".

Professor Cesterbu concurs with Beale by saying, “The sexual instinct is not so blindly all-powerful that it cannot be controlled and even subjugated entirely by moral strength. We must know that robust health and ever-renewed vigour will be the reward of this voluntary service”.

Sir Andrew Clark also agrees that “continence does not harm; it does not hinder development; it increases perception and energy”.

That the practice of continence is a fitting remedy for birth control has been emphasized by the noted American, Joseph H.J. Spenglar. He says, “Moral restraint offers a salutary solution to the problem of over-population”.

Gandhiji answered his critics by the example of his personal life. In his autobiography he writes: “I took the vow of Brahmacharya in 1906. I launched forth with faith in the sustaining power of God. The more or less practice of self-control has been going on since”.

Gandhiji was a man of experience and whatever he spoke was from his personal experience only. His was not an arm-chair philosophy. He emphasized that continence was the prime qualification for success in all achievements and in every walk of life.

“I hold that a life of perfect continence in thought, speech and action is necessary for reaching spiritual perfection. Brahmacharya means perfect control of all the sense-organs. For a true Brahmachari, nothing is impossible.”

It is obvious that strict celibacy, as practiced by Bhishma, Lakshmana and Hanuman, is not possible for the masses; but it is essential for their physical, moral and spiritual growth. They should have a well-restrained and sacred marital relationship.

Bernard Shaw, a highly intellectual and profound spiritual personality, but an atheist and a non-believer in organized religions as accepted by the masses, voiced the universally accepted truth that “unless we restrain desire we destroy ourselves.”

Danger of Artificial Means

“In my opinion we can give an impetus to birth control in our country by ways and means which ought to come instinctively to us if we are true to the best traditions of our civilization. Perhaps in no other country in the world has the practice of continence been advocated with such emphasis as in India by all our saints and sages. Self-restraint on the part of both men and women, and particularly on the part of men, must therefore be the first weapon in our armoury if we are to battle successfully against overpopulation in our country. Artificial methods seem to the average man to be easy of attainment. Hence, they are advocated by all and sundry. I look up at this as a danger signal because it is always the straight and narrow way that leads us to salvation”.

Thus did Rajkumari Amrit Kaur represent the real sentiment of the majority of the masses of our country in the *Harijan*.

The women of India have a great role to play in thwarting the onslaught of materialism. Through the ages, it is they who have preserved the spiritual character of our society, their natural instincts being religious. It is ignoble that they should subscribe to the philosophy of the modern apostates.

Gandhiji wrote over a decade ago: "In my opinion it is an insult to the fair sex to put up her case in support of birth control by artificial methods. I have little doubt that the vast majority of women will reject them as inconsistent with their dignity".

It is high time now that the leaders of our country became aware of the ignominous consequences of birth-control through artificial means. They should launch a country-wide campaign, particularly in the villages, propagating the gospel of self-restraint, abolition of early marriage, and practice of clean and healthy living.

The nation is fortunate in having Amrit Kaur as its Health Minister. Though miserably outnumbered by the votaries of contraceptives, she emphasizes once more: "Artificial methods are wholly impractical in our country because of the ignorance of our people, the lack of scientific medical aid available to them, and also because of their high cost. I challenge the statement myself that the practice of birth control by the use of contraceptives has proved a success either physically, mentally or morally for the people of the West who have practiced it over a number of years.

"On the other hand it has contributed in no small measure to a lowering of the standard of morality and to a disregard by both men and women of the fundamental responsibility given to human kind for procreation. While birth control is essential for India to restrict its growing population, the more I live and serve the cause of health, and the closer contacts I have with sick and suffering humanity, both in the city and in the village, the more convinced I become that it will be a fatal step for our country to resort to artificial means".

Gandhiji writes in the *Harijan*: "There is nothing in our society at the present time which is conducive to the practice of self-control. Our very up-bringing is against it. The primary concern of parents is to get their children married anyhow so that they may breed like rabbits. If they are girls, they are married at the earliest age convenient, irrespective of their moral welfare. The marriage ceremony is one long, drawn-out agony of frivolity and feasting. The householder's life is in keeping with the past life. It is a prolongation of self-indulgence. Holidays and social enjoyments are so arranged as to allow one the greatest latitude for sensuous living. The literature that is almost thrust on our generation panders to animal passion. Modern literature almost teaches that indulgence in it is a duty and total abstinence a sin.

"Is it any wonder if control of the sexual appetite has become very difficult, if not impossible? If the practice of birth control through self-restraint is then the most desirable, sensible and totally harmless method, we must forthwith change the environment and social

ideal. The only way to bring about the desired results is for individuals who believe in the method of self-control to make the beginning themselves and, with unquenchable faith, to affect their surroundings. For them the conception of marriage I discussed earlier seems to me to be of the greatest significance.

"A proper grasp of it means a complete mental revolution. It is not meant merely for a few select individuals. It is presented as the law of human species. Its breach reduces the status of human beings and brings swift punishment in the shape of multiplicity of unwanted children, a train of diseases, and disruption of man as a moral being responsible to his Maker.

"Birth-control by the use of contraceptives no doubt regulates the number of newcomers to some extent and enables a person of moderate means to keep the wolf from the door. But the moral harm it does to the individual and to society is incalculable. For one thing, the outlook upon life for those who satisfy the sexual appetite for the sake of it is wholly changed. Marriage ceases to be a sacrament for them. It means a revaluation of the social ideals hitherto prized as a precious treasure. No doubt this argument will make little appeal to those who regard the old ideals about marriage as mere superstition. My argument is only addressed to those who still regard marriage as a sacrament and woman not as an instrument of animal pleasure but as the mother of man and trustee of the virtue of her progeny.

"My experience of self-control by fellow workers and myself confirms for me the view presented here. It assumes overwhelming force from my discovery in a vivid light of the ancient concept of marriage. To me, the practice of Brahmacharya in married life now assumes its natural and inevitable position and becomes as simple as the fact of marriage itself. Any other method of birth control seems unthinkable and useless. If the idea that the grand and only function of the sexual organ is generation, possesses men and women, then union for any other purpose will be held as a criminal waste of the vital fluid, and the consequent excitement caused to woman and man as an equally criminal waste of precious energy.

"It is now easy to understand why the scientists of old placed such great value upon the vital fluid and why they insisted upon its strong transmutation into the highest form of energy for the benefit of society as a whole. They boldly stated that one who attained perfect control over the sexual energy strengthened the whole being—physical, mental and spiritual—and attained powers unattainable by any other means.

"Let not the reader be disturbed by the absence of many or even any living specimen of such giant Brahmacharis as were found in days of yore. The Brahmacharis that we have today are incomplete specimens. At best they are aspirants who have acquired control of the body but not of the mind. They have not become proof against temptation. This is not because Brahmacharya is so difficult of attainment. It is because the social environment is against them, and the majority of those who are making an honest effort unknowingly isolate the control of animal passion from all other passions, whereas, to be successful the effort must include control of all passions to which man is a prey. Whilst complete Brahmacharya is not impossible of attainment by the average man and woman, it must not be felt that it requires less effort than that required by a student who wishes to master one of the sciences".